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THE CHARACTERIZATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY IN FOUR  
THIRTEENTH CENTURY NARRATIVE COLLECTIONS OF  
MIRACLES: JACOBUS DE VORAGINE'S LEGENDA AUREA,  
GONZALO DE BERCEO'S MILAGROS DE NUESTRA SENORA,  
GAUTIER DE COINCI'S MIRACLES DE NOSTRE DAME, AND  
ALFONSO EL SABIO'S CANTIGAS DE SANTA MARIA.

New York University, Ph.D., 1975  
Literature, general

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THE CHARACTERIZATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY IN FOUR THIRTEENTH  
CENTURY NARRATIVE COLLECTIONS OF MIRACLES: JACOBUS DE  
VORAGINE'S LEGENDA AUREA, GONZALO DE BERCIO'S MILAGROS DE  
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AND ALFONSO EL SABIO'S CANTIGAS DE SANTA MARIA.

SONDRA ROSLYN HELLER

FEBRUARY, 1975

A dissertation in the Department of Comparative Literature  
submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of Arts  
and Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at New York University.

Approved:

Nancy F. Regalado  
Research Adviser

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To Jenny and Jocelyn

"One would admit anything that  
she should require. If you had  
only the soul of a shrimp, you  
would crawl, like the Abbé Suger,  
to kiss her feet."

Henry Adams  
Mont St. Michel and Chartres

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But it is to my daughters, who taught me the true meaning of time, that I dedicate this work.

## INTRODUCTION

The cult of the Virgin was a religious, social and cultural phenomenon whose adoration of Mary reached its peak of literary expression in the thirteenth century. In the twelfth century a flourishing of hymns in praise of Mary begins to appear, such as those by Adam of St. Victor and Bernard of Clairvaux. One century later, these hymns are replaced in part by the short narrative miracle. This great literary production is indicative of a widespread dedication to Mariolatry. A brief look into the development of the cult of the Virgin will give us a basis for our study of all its literary manifestations.

The literary expression of Mariolatry is a fairly recent manifestation of an adoration that is a transference from primitive times. Christopher Dawson speaks of the cult of Earth Mother in neolithic and paleolithic ages. At that remote time: "...there is added a second figure, that of her divine son and lover, who is the personification of the vegetative life of Nature."<sup>1</sup> Dawson also speaks of a cult of the woman in Asia Minor in the third century A.D., and emphasizes that it was part of a peasant culture.<sup>2</sup> This emphasis is of historical importance, as the cult of the Virgin, as it later developed throughout Europe, also had a special popularity among the lower classes. Mary had long held a position of honor in the Eastern Church and the fourth century fathers amplified this view by "presenting her as the ideal ascetic, devoted to fasting and prayer. First the Syrian and then the Greek Church took up her cult. The greatest force in the West,

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Dawson, The Age of the Gods (New York: 1928), p. 93. c.f. Erich Neumann, The Great Mother: Analysis of the Archetype trans., Ralph Manheim, Bollingen Series, XLVII (New York: 1955).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

which made for its extension was the commanding influence of men like Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine, the great exponents of the spiritual value of virginity."<sup>3</sup>

As the Western Church developed, Mary was seen as the new Eve; a similar allegorical transfer is made from Adam to Christ.<sup>4</sup> The Catholic Church explains the cult of the Virgin as a logical transfer of the first century devotion to the martyrs, who served as intercessors for sinners before God.<sup>5</sup> H. P. Ahsmann dates the actual emergence of the modern cult of the Virgin to 431 and the Council of Ephesus in which a controversy arose over the application of the term Theotokos, Mother of God, to Mary.<sup>6</sup> Later centuries brought increased Marian devotion:

In the West, by the eighth century the cult of the Virgin was universal; churches were raised everywhere in her honour, her praises were celebrated in the offices, and it soon became usual for an altar to be dedicated to her in every large church. But the monasteries were the great centres where the devotion to Mary grew, from which it radiated. Nearly every monastic order professed some kind of special devotion to the Virgin.<sup>7</sup>

The Church was an effective social barometer during the Middle Ages. As the Church began to develop new problems, both internally and externally, a chasm began to form between the Church and the faithful: "Tension between reality and ideal was naturally felt first most strongly within the Church. The Church

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<sup>3</sup> F. J. E. Raby, A History of Christian-Latin Poetry from the Beginnings to the Close of the Middle Ages, 2nd ed. (Oxford: 1953) p. 363.

<sup>4</sup> Juniper Carol, O.F.M., ed., Mariology, 3 vols. (Milwaukee: 1955) I, 112.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., II, 3.

<sup>6</sup> H. P. Ahsmann, Le culte de la sainte Vierge et la littérature française profane du moyen âge (Paris and Utrecht: 1930), p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Raby, p. 364.

preached a doctrine of indifference to worldly affairs, yet it was forced to deal with money and temporal goods because it had assumed heavy social burdens such as schools, charities and the administration of the Crusades."<sup>8</sup> But it was not only the attitude of "Do as I say, not as I do" that widened the chasm. The lower friars, who had the closest contact with the common people, were becoming increasingly anti-Papal in sentiment.<sup>9</sup>

Seen through the eyes of the Church, Mary is accorded only the most limited of roles: "Mary's role, then during her public life of Jesus was prayerful retirement. Jesus wished to avoid even the semblance of undue human attachment and to concentrate the attention of men upon Himself."<sup>10</sup> How unlike the Mary portrayed in the thirteenth century miracles! The Church defined Mary's only role as that of Mediatrix; St. Anselm noted that "anyone who turns to Mary cannot possibly perish for she is the mother of salvation and the saved....Those devoted to Mary have a powerful advocate with Christ at the time of their judgement."<sup>11</sup> The Church saw Mary's cult as only related to her position as Mediatrix;<sup>12</sup> she existed only as God's instrument. But by the twelfth century, "The cult of the Virgin had assumed such proportions and evoked so much fervour that the figure of the Mother of Christ begins to eclipse that of her Son and all the apostles and saints."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>  
Nancy F. Regalado, Poetic Patterns in Rutebeuf: A Study in Non-Courtly Poetic Modes of the Thirteenth Century (New York: 1970), p. 15.

<sup>9</sup>  
Christopher Dawson, Religion and the Rise of Western Culture (New York: 1950), p. 262.

<sup>10</sup>  
Carol, Mariology, I, 103.

<sup>11</sup>  
Ibid., III, 18.

<sup>12</sup>  
Ibid., p. 21.

As we will see, thirteenth century Marian literature disproves the narrow portrayal of Mary's role in the Church cult. A great part of the cult's popularity was due not only to the people's remoteness from the Church, but also to their inability to identify with the Trinity:

To the common, ignorant peasant, no such trouble occurred, for he knew that the Trinity in its simpler form as the first condition of life, like time and space and force. No human being was so stupid as not to understand that the father, mother, and child made a trinity....(The Churchmen) were doing their utmost, though unconsciously, to identify the Holy Ghost with the Mother....The mass of mankind wanted something nearer than either the Father or the Son; they wanted the Mother.<sup>14</sup>

While Henry Adams may not be a theologian, he accurately describes the Mary that predominates in medieval art and literature. His is the only description of Mary's role as seen by the common people that is applicable to Marian literature: "She alone represented Love. The Trinity were, or was, One, and could, by the nature of its essence, administer justice alone. Only child-like illusion could expect a personal favour from Christ....One was forced from corner to corner by a remorseless logic until one fell helpless at Mary's feet."<sup>15</sup>

While there is ample theological writing about the Virgin, and scant commentary concerning the importance of her cult to literature, only Adams, of all the authors I have read, seems to fully appreciate and understand the strength of her position, her importance to medieval society: "Mary concentrated in herself the whole rebellion of man against fate; the whole protest against divine law; the whole unutterable fury of human nature beating

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<sup>14</sup> Henry Adams, Mont St. Michel and Chartres (New York: 1961), pp. 298-99.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

itself against the walls of its prison-house, and suddenly seized by a hope that in the Virgin man had found a door of escape."<sup>16</sup> But more important still, Adams strongly emphasizes Mary's womanhood, an immutable force in her miracle stories, during a period of otherwise misogynistic literature.<sup>17</sup> "The fact, conspicuous above all other historical certainties about religion, that the Virgin was by essence illogical, unreasonable, and feminine, is the only fact of any ultimate value worth studying."<sup>18</sup> Such a delightfully opinionated statement accurately describes the feelings, if not all the facts, of the cult of the Virgin in literature. Writing about Henry Adams, Yvor Winters says: "He had, no faith, however...he read in each new event the meaning that the universe was meaningless."<sup>19</sup> "The universe of Ockham here described bears a precise resemblance...to the universe of Henry Adams, with this exception: that in the universe of Henry Adams there is no God."<sup>20</sup> Perhaps. But I cannot possibly be convinced that Adams writes of the Virgin in Mont St. Michel and Chartres in the spirit of sarcasm or intentional irony. Perhaps he had no faith; perhaps there is no God in Adams' universe. But there is, most assuredly, a Virgin Mary.

While the Adams book accurately captures the spirit of Mary, it deals principally with the medieval French cathedrals

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<sup>16</sup>

Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>17</sup>

Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, trans. Willard Trask (New York: 1953), p. 125.

<sup>18</sup>

Adams, p. 254.

<sup>19</sup>

Yvor Winters, "Henry Adams, or the Creation of Confusion," in In Defense of Reason (Denver: 1937), p. 391.

<sup>20</sup>

Ibid., p. 375.



constructed in her honor. Our specific concern is the four thirteenth century collections of miracles written for her. While we will consider some Marian poetry and her later appearances in the medieval theater, it is these collections that provide us with the material with which to make a comparative study. The four books that we will be primarily concerned with are the feast days accorded to Mary in the Legenda Aurea of Jacobus de Voragine; the Miracles de Nostre Dame of Gautier de Coinci; the Milagros de Nuestra Señora of Gonzalo de Berceo; and the Cantigas de Santa María of Alfonso el Sabio.

Our primary interest is a characterization of the material found in these four texts, and not an investigation of possible manuscript sources for the miracles. Such investigations often deal with twelfth century anonymous collections. Mussafia's monographs are concerned with possible sources for manuscripts of Latin prose miracles of the eleventh and twelfth century, which are divided into three groups. The first collection, designated as HM (as the first story deals with Hydlefonsus) is from the eleventh century. His second consideration is the collection of William of Malmesbury (died 1147), an important source for later English miracles. His third concern is a series of seventeen anonymous miracles, known as TS (Toledo-Sanstag), dated approximately 1128. The emphasis is not on the actual texts of the miracles or their position within a collection.<sup>21</sup>

Paul Meyer has also provided a very useful bibliography of French verse miracles, divided into two groups. He deals with

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Adolf Mussafia, Studien zu den mittelalterlichen Marienlegenden in Sitzungsberichte der k.k. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien, Philo-Hist. Klasse, v. 113 (1887), v. 115 (1888), v. 119 (1889), v. 123 (1891), v. 129 (1898).

some miracles by Gautier de Coincy, Jean de Marchant, Adgar,<sup>22</sup> and certain miracles from the Vie de Péres. His second grouping consists mostly of twelfth century anonymous miracles.<sup>23</sup> Other hagiographic and miracle literature of the period is scattered among less prolific authors.<sup>24</sup>

Hilding Kjellman's book<sup>25</sup> is very valuable both for its manuscript source material and its collection of anonymous Anglo-Normand verse miracles. This collection consists of sixty thirteenth century miracles divided into three books. Each book is preceded by a Latin prose prologue. There is also an overall Latin prose prologue at the beginning of the collection. Like other Marian authors, the trouvère claims in the epilogue that he is only translating and asks Mary for her help. The average length of these miracles is 200 lines. As this bibliographic material indicates, almost all the works I have found deal either exclusively with French literature or are primarily concerned with the problem of sources.

A collection of Marian and other religious songs of the Middle Ages has been published by the Finnish Academy,<sup>26</sup> but it too has little literary commentary. There is also an extensive collection of

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For a detailed consideration of Adgar's Miracles, see M. Dominica Legge, Anglo-Norman Literature and Its Background. (Oxford: 1963), pp. 187-91.

23

Paul Meyer, Notice sur le recueil de miracles de la Vierge renfermé dans le ms. Bibl. Nat. fr., 818. Not. et extr. des mss. de la Bibliothèque Nationale et autres bibliothèques, 34:2 (Paris: 1895).

24

Legge, pp. 267-72.

25

Hilding Kjellman, La deuxième collection anglo-normande des Miracles de la Sainte Vierge et son original latin (Paris: 1922).

26

E. Järnström and A. Långfors, eds., Recueil de chansons pieuses du XIIIe siècle, II. (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae. Ser. B, 20, No. 4) (Helsinki: 1927). Also E. Järnström, ed., Recueil de chansons pieuses du XIIIe siècle, I. (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae. Ser. B, 3, No. 10. (Helsinki: 1910).

fourteenth century French Marian plays,<sup>27</sup> without commentary or critical perspective.

There are a few critical works devoted to each of the separate Marian authors, but little or nothing dealing exclusively with the collections of miracles. Of the two books dedicated exclusively to Berceo's Milagros, Becker's<sup>28</sup> is concerned only with sources, and Gariano's<sup>29</sup> study is strictly a stylistic analysis. There is scant bibliography for Jacobus de Voragine<sup>30</sup> and no work at all dedicated to only the Marian stories of the Legenda Aurea. I found no separate study of Alfonso's Cantigas, but Keller's book contains a valuable chapter dealing with the miracle narratives.<sup>31</sup> Mettmann's definitive edition of the Cantigas provides useful notes and manuscript comparisons.<sup>32</sup> There is even less information on Gautier: there are no books concerning his Miracles and only one definitive article.<sup>33</sup> Koenig provides a useful introduction in

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27

G. Paris and U. Robert, eds., Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages, 8 vols. (Paris: 1876-83).

28

Richard Becker, Gonzalo de Berceo's Milagros und ihre Grundlagen (Strassburg: 1910).

29

Carmelo Gariano, Análisis estilístico de los Milagros de Nuestra Señora de Berceo (Madrid: 1971).

30

Ernest Cushing Richardson, Materials for a Life of Jacopo da Varagine (New York: 1935) and Maria von Nagy and N. de Christoph, Die Legenda Aurea und ihr Verfasser Jacobus de Voragine (Bern: 1971).

31

John Esten Keller, Alfonso X, el Sabio (New York: 1967).

32

Alfonso X, o Sabio, Cantigas de Santa María, 3 vols. ed. Walter Mettmann (Coimbra: 1959-64).

33

A. P. Ducrot-Granderye, "Etudes sur les Miracles Nostre Dame de Gautier de Coinci," Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, Ser. B, XXV, 2 (1932), 1-287.

his edition.<sup>34</sup> Thomas Crane's article on the French Marian miracles is also concerned with sources.<sup>35</sup> There are also a few articles dealing with a specific miracle story, such as that of The Clerk and the Ring,<sup>36</sup> which we will discuss at length in Chapter Three.

The reader finds almost no information at all concerning the cult of the Virgin as a literary phenomenon. To my knowledge, Ahsmann's book is one of the few such studies and while it provides useful information, there is little commentary and no criticism. Sister Mary Gripkey's book<sup>37</sup> on Mary as Mediatrix limits itself to France and the role of Mary as Intercessor. Sister Gripkey's book provides a thorough study of all possible Eastern and Western sources of the miracles. I have found only one article that deals with the miracles in a comparative manner<sup>38</sup> and it only attempts to prove that Alfonso knew the work of Gautier by certain textual similarities. There has been no comparative textual study of an intensive nature of the thirteenth century Marian miracles in narrative collections.

Such a study is necessary in order to see how Mary emerges

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34

Gautier de Coinci, Miracles de Nostre Dame, 4 vols., ed. Frédéric Koenig (Paris and Geneva: 1966-70).

35

Thomas Crane, "Miracles of the Virgin," Romanic Review, II (1911), 235-78.

36

P. F. Baum, "The Young Man Betrothed to a Statue," PMLA, XXIV (1919).

37

Sister Mary Vincentine Gripkey, The Blessed Virgin Mary as Mediatrix in the Latin and Old French Legend Prior to the Fourteenth Century (Washington, D.C.: 1938).

38

Teresa Marullo, "Osservazione sulla Cantigas di Alfonso X e sui Miracles de Gautier de Coinci," Archivum Romanicum, XVIII (1934), 495-539.

as a distinguishable literary personality, far more varied and complex than in her limited theological role.<sup>39</sup> We will begin with the structure of the collections, dealing not only with Marian narratives, but also with other short narrative collections, in order to consider the evolution of the collections of short narrative in the thirteenth century. Chapter Two will deal with availability of themes in Marian miracles. We will establish our own categories of themes based on our readings of the texts. Chapter Three will deal with four of the most popular themes, treated differently by the four authors. Such a comparison will demonstrate each author's style and approach to the miracle stories. Chapter Four will deal with each author and his work individually. Our final chapter will deal with the evolution from narrative to theater, both in thirteenth and fourteenth century plays. We intend to show that a successful literary characterization of the cult of the Virgin in medieval literature completely depends on a successful characterization of Mary as a dramatic personage. In addition, the study of the Marian stories leads us to make a contribution to the study of the thirteenth century short narrative.

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For a complete and detailed study of the religious aspects of the cult, see Carol, Mariology.

## CHAPTER ONE: STRUCTURE OF THE COLLECTIONS

In order to properly examine the collections of thirteenth century short narrative Marian miracles, it is necessary to consider other medieval collections of short narratives as well. Such a study should begin with the structure of the collections. In a comparative work, an examination of structure provides valuable information about the sources of themes, the styles of the individual authors, and the purpose of putting short narratives in collections. The intention of an individual author can often be determined from the structure of his book, and it is this intent that is interwoven with his style and choice of theme. First, we will deal with external structural elements such as title, genre, order and length of material, use of Latin or Romance, use of verse or prose. Next, we will consider the internal structural elements of the collections: formulaic beginning and end, number of characters, use of monologue and dialogue. The most important structural consideration will be the presence of a unifying factor in each collection, a role filled by Mary in the collections of her miracle stories.

The beginning of medieval collections of short narratives can be found in the encyclopedic trend of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, with books such as the Speculum maius of Vincent de Beauvais. The tendency toward actual collections of stories, in which the collection as a unity is more important than the individual story, reaches its peak

in the thirteenth century, although even more frequent and longer collections are to be found in the fourteenth century, in works such as the Ovide Moralisé.

Such a compiler of stories in a volume of encyclopedic proportions was Jacobus de Voragine. Born in Varaggio (Varazze) on the coast of Genoa, near Savona, his date of birth is approximated between 1228 and 1230. His family was of no nobility nor special distinction and he entered the Order of Preachers in 1244. His being a Dominican played an essential role in his devotion to Mary: "Un vrai fils de Dominique, il ne néglige pas d'accorder une place importante à la Vierge, surtout lorsqu'il parle des quatre fêtes mariales. Il y exalte la bienfaitrice de son ordre, rapportant tout ce que l'Evangile ou la légende racontent à son sujet, et reproduisant les plus belles pensées que sa piété filiale lui suggère, afin de faire connaître et aimer davantage la Reine des cieux."<sup>1</sup>

Because of his knowledge and ability, Jacobus was appointed to teach Theology and Sacred Scripture by his Order in Northern Italy. He was elected official provincial of the Dominican province of Lombardy in 1267, a position he held until 1287 when he was made definitior of the province. After certain political events and his previous refusals, Jacobus became Archbishop of Genoa at the height of her power. In contrast

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<sup>1</sup>Ahsmann, pp. 37-38.

to the opulence of the high clergy, he was known as "father of the poor" due to both the life he lived and his charitable acts. He died on July 13, 1298 and was beatified by Pope Pius VII in 1816.

Jacobus is considered to be the author of an extensive number of works, most of which do not survive. His most famous works existing in modern editions are his Chronicum genuense, an important historical document, and the Legenda Aurea, which he personally called the Legenda Sanctorum, intended as a Gospel lectionary to be utilized in sermons. He is also known to have written a commentary on the writings of Saint Augustine, as well as a large collection of sermons and assorted smaller works.<sup>2</sup>

Considering the Legenda Aurea as a whole, one must recognize that Voragine's devotions are distributed evenly among the saints of the Church. His book is really a hagiographic Summa.<sup>3</sup> The title by which the book came to be known, Legenda Aurea, was often used to refer to all collections of saints' lives, and not just the specific work of Voragine.<sup>4</sup> Mâle comments: "Such is the claim of the Golden Legend. In the thirteenth

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<sup>2</sup>Ernest Cushing Richardson, Materials for a Life of Jacopo da Voragine (New York: 1935), pp. ix-xi.

<sup>3</sup>Paul Zumthor, Histoire Littéraire de la France Médiévale (VI-XIV siècles) (Paris: 1954), p. 273.

<sup>4</sup>Emile Mâle, The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century, trans. Dora Nussey (New York: 1958), p. 280 n.



century men found there all that they loved best: a picture of human life, a summary of the world's history, strange adventures, and wonderful miracles."<sup>5</sup> Voragine's very traditional collection of miracle tales is a narrative Latin prose illustration of the celebration of feast days in the liturgical calendar. It is for this reason that there are only four such days devoted to Mary alone, in keeping with the thirteenth century religious practice: De purificatione beatae Mariae virginis (Candlemas), De annuntiatione dominica (Annunciation), De assumptione sanctae Mariae virginis (Assumption), and De nativitate beatae Mariae virginis (Nativity). Mary's stories are primarily concerned with the performance of miracles. There is a parallel between her few appearances in the Bible and the number of appearances in the Legenda; the only exceptions are her appearances of a secondary nature in stories of other saints' days, as in De nativitate sancti Johannis baptistae. The stories dedicated to Mary, like all the other stories of saints in the book, have little or no dialogue and no definitive dramatic action.

The question of the order of the stories in the Legenda is defined by the adherence of its author to the liturgical calendar and to conservative Church tradition. But it is noteworthy that William Caxton's translation, published in 1483, changes the order of the feast days in many places, a decision reflective of changing devotions and customs. Caxton also

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 281.

reduces the Biblical source information that begins each Latin story, dealing with the history of the specific saint or the episode in the Virgin's life, to a one or two sentence Latin introduction. It is with this formula that Caxton begins each story, thereby reducing the importance of liturgical information in favor of more entertaining material. When he deals with the actual miracles themselves, Caxton alters the stories, sometimes omitting certain miracles, sometimes adding others that do not appear in the original text. An interesting example of stories omitted and stories added can be found in the Latin text of De nativitate beatae Mariae virginis. In Caxton's translation, the story of St. Jerome and the image of the Virgin is added, while the same translation omits the original Latin anecdote of the man and his mother-in-law found under the entry for that same feast day.<sup>6</sup>

The need for a unifying principle in the Legenda poses little problem, as we have noted that the stories adhere to Biblical references in the pattern of the Church calendar. Within each separate feast day dedicated to the Virgin, Voragine includes between two and nine individual anecdotes of Marian miracles, each numbered, as in the original manuscript, and beginning a separate paragraph in the narrative. With the exception of De purificatione beatae Mariae virginis, in which the first anecdote deals directly with the feast of Candlemas, no group of stories within a specific day is thematically

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<sup>6</sup>Jacobus de Voragine, Legenda Aurea, ed. T. Graesse (Dresden and Leipzig: 1846), pp. 585-95.

related to the feast of that day, nor are these anecdotal miracles related to each other. An illustration of this is the stories found in De nativitate beatae Mariae virginis, containing nine separate anecdotes dealing with the following themes: 1) a knight devoted to the Virgin, whom she helps in a tourney; 2) a bishop who sings the praises of Mary; 3) a widow who steals the Christchild image from the church to replace her incarcerated son; 4) a thief whom the Virgin saves because of his devotion; 5) a clerk who promises himself to the Virgin; 6) the ignorant priest who knows only the mass of Mary; 7) the high-living clerk saved from damnation by the Virgin; 8) Theophilus; 9) the man with the troublesome mother-in-law. The same lack of specific pattern exists in the internal order of the other days as well. It is the Virgin herself who emerges as the unifying narrative and dramatic factor, as do the saints within their days. She is also the only logical prime mover for the drawing together of stories otherwise thematically unrelated.

While Mary is the unifying factor that organizes the feast days dedicated to her in the Legenda Aurea, non-Marian collections of short narratives also need a similar basis for organization. These collections often use a moral or edifying purpose as their unifying factor. Jacques de Vitry's Exempla is an excellent example of such a collection. Relatively little is known of Jacques de Vitry's life, especially when we consider the importance of his Exempla to medieval literature as a whole, and, more specifically, its importance to the

development of the short narrative in the thirteenth century. It is supposed that Jacques de Vitry was born in 1180 in France, near or in the area known by that name, and that he died in 1240. He was a member of the Order of Oignies, an Order devoted to St. Mary the Ascetic, a close friend of his, who, while not officially named a saint, was known throughout France for her selfless dedication to Christianity. Like Gautier, one must imagine that Jacques came from a family of some standing, but exact information to this effect is lacking.<sup>7</sup> Very little else of his life of any relevance to his Exempla is known. His other works can best be discussed in relation to this book.

The editor of the present collection defines the medieval exempla as a systematic use of apologues.<sup>8</sup> The original collection contains an extensive prologue (proemium) which we will discuss at length. Then follow seventy-four short narrative Latin prose stories. These stories are organized in a very specific way: they are divided almost exactly in half by content, as the first thirty-six with the exception of number sixteen ("to scholars") and number seventeen ("to judges and lawyers...") are directed towards members of the religious community. Numbers thirty-seven through seventy-four

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<sup>7</sup>Jacques de Vitry, The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the "Sermones Vulgares," ed. Thomas Frederick Crane (London: 1890; rpt. New York: 1971), intro., pp. xxi-xxv.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. xvii.

are dedicated to the laity, to secular people of different stations and different occupations. The moralizing stories are between ten and thirty lines in length.

Although the stories are neatly divided into two basic groups, it is still necessary to look for an overall unifying factor, a purpose for this collection of stories. It is certainly not Mary, as she is mentioned only once, in number sixty, known in French collections as La Nonne Enlevée,<sup>9</sup> a mixture of versions of a popular theme seen in Gautier, of the nun dedicated to the Virgin who leaves the convent to marry a nobleman, but repents and returns. In some later versions, such as the nineteenth century Margarita la tornera, which appears in Zorrilla's Leyendas, the nun, the keeper of the keys for the convent (and, therefore "la tornera") is replaced by the Virgin in her absence, so that no one ever knows that she was missing. But apart from this single story in the Exempla, there is no other mention of Mary in the collection.

The unifying principle of the Exempla is their purpose: a collection of short narratives written in Latin prose, as was the custom of writers of sermons, with the intent of edification. Such exempla were to be included in the popular sermons of the preachers of the day. Almost all religious collectors and users of exempla were Dominicans, as they represented the outstanding preaching order of the century, with only slight competition from the Franciscans.<sup>10</sup> Jacques

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. cxi.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. xix-xxi.

de Vitry is himself an exception to this rule, being of the Order of Oignies. He was known foremost as a preacher in the Crusade against the Albigenses, an historical fact noted in the Speculum Historiale of Vincent de Beauvais.<sup>11</sup> The sermones vulgares, as the Exempla are called, are popular stories to be utilized in making sermons more appealing to the public. Thomas Crane's excellent classification of the different categories of exempla in the Middle Ages is of great use to us here, as it clarifies Jacques de Vitry's book in a literary as well as a religious perspective. The first category he establishes contains the Exempla, stories in which the final moral lesson is to be left to the judgement of the preacher. The stories have no independent value, but have only a concise form to be expanded at the discretion of the preacher.<sup>12</sup>

The second category for exempla established by Crane is for collections not specifically intended for the use of preachers, such as the Gesta Romanorum. The book makes no mention of its intended use for the perusal of preachers, although that is a practical possibility, while its organization (or lack of it) makes this approach highly inconvenient. In the Gesta Romanorum, monkish tales are rare, and ninety of

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. xxvi.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. lxxx.

the two hundred eighty-three in the Oesterley collection are from pagan (classical) sources.<sup>13</sup> Compiled by a cleric in about 1300, the Gesta Romanorum is basically a collection of the recounting of the deeds of the Romans, as the title implies, although it includes stories of both Greek and Oriental origin as well. The scope of the five hundred page book is also part of the encyclopedic trend that is exemplified by the thousand page Legenda Aurea. Unlike the strict adherence to pattern in Voragine's work, the Gesta is a collection of two hundred and eighty-three Latin prose stories dealing with the prevalence of all vices and examples from history by which the reader is convinced to follow the path of virtue. The anecdote itself is rarely more than the length of one page, and is followed by a paragraph called "Application" in which the moral of the anecdote is applied to the reader's possible dilemma and thereby resolved, be it in religious or secular terms. As the Virgin is the unifying factor in the collections of anecdotes in the feast days in the Legenda, so does the Gesta Romanorum follow the pattern of the Exempla in establishing an overall moralizing tone that unites the pieces. This unity is even more important to the structure of the Gesta Romanorum, as there is no other specific order or governing structural principle to unify the work. Crane comments that the category containing the Gesta Romanorum is characteristic of the Church's use of allegory and symbolism, first applied to fables at the end of the twelfth century,

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. lxxxv.

but which rapidly extended to the exempla. More care is taken with the form of such stories than with those in the previous category. They are less concise, and appear as collections of entertaining pieces, and not as sermons.<sup>14</sup>

It is important to understand that the sermones vulgares that contain the exempla are the sixth and final part of a series of collections of sermons, in which the sermones dominicales occupy the first four parts and the sermones de sanctis the fifth. The first five parts are in accordance with the ecclesiastical year, much like the system used by Voragine. These sections represent Advent, Easter, Pentecost, Pilgrimage, and the Advent of Christ. The sixth section, containing the sermones vulgares, is titled sextam in Sermonibus nostris.<sup>15</sup> It is necessary to see the Exempla as part of such a carefully planned whole, not only to properly understand it as one-sixth of a total work, but also to see the structural groundwork

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. lxxx-lxxxi. Crane says that the first person to use the method applicable to this category was the English Cistercian monk Odo de Ceritona (Eide de Cheriton), during the last quarter of the twelfth century. (p. lxxxi) It is this second category that contains the Legenda Aurea. A connecting work between the two is the Scala Celi of Frater Johannes Junior, dated at about the middle of the fourteenth century. (p. lxxxvi) The third category, in which allegory is more important and the stories just an illustration is represented by Thomas Cantipratanus' Bonum universale apibus, a moralized natural history, written in the thirteenth century. (p. xc)

<sup>15</sup>The sections are described under the following headings: principio adventus Domini usque ad Nativitatem; a Septuagesima usque Octavus Paschae; a Pascha usque ad Octavus-Pentecostis; tempus perigrinationis...(ab Octavis Pentecostis) usque ad Adventum Domini; ad Sanctorum solemnitates pertinet, qui nobis sunt exempla iustitiae.



set for the Legenda Aurea, as Voragine was a great collector of exempla.<sup>16</sup>

Jacques de Vitry's Exempla is not only important as a collection of short narratives, but also as an effective comparison and contrast to the Marian stories. The most striking similarity between the exempla and the miracle stories is Jacques de Vitry's organization by social class and profession as compared with our grouping of characters in a Marian miracle by social class in Chapter Two. The exempla are not only organized by social levels; they also underline the importance of the preacher's adaptation of a story outline to present to an audience comprised of different social levels.<sup>17</sup> The Marian miracles were written to be read, and not to be utilized as material for sermons, as were the exempla. The exempla, then, could command a heterogeneous social audience, as no special class distinction nor education was necessary to listen to the sermons that contained them. The miracles, however, were limited to a certain class of people at a certain time and place. While sermons containing Marian material did exist, such material was exclusively Biblical or liturgical, and not based on narrative versions of her miracles.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>J. T. Welter, L'exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du moyen âge (Paris: 1927), p. 160.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 68-70.

<sup>18</sup>References to Mary in a sermon are not unlike references to her in Marian lyric poetry, which will be discussed in Chapter Four. Mary is only mentioned symbolically or Biblically in these poems, as in the sermons, and is never treated as a dramatic character. Such a case is the sermon of Stephen of Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, delivered in 1207, in which he calls Mary "...rose fleure/Cest est la flur, ceste est la lis." In "Un sermon en vers" in Poésies Gothiques, Achille Jubinal, ed. (Paris: 1834), intro. p. 3.

Such a distinction between audiences led to a variation in structure between the two forms. The exempla contain three essential elements: a narrative description, a moral or religious example, and an application of the example to the audience.<sup>19</sup> All narrative and descriptive material is in the past and present, with all details of the sketchy outline to be provided by the preacher.<sup>20</sup> The first two elements, description and moral or religious example, can be found in the Marian miracles, but such an example is implicit in the nature of the story, as it is a Miracle of Our Lady. There is no need for a moral, as Mary's actions and the inevitable salvation of the sinner speak for themselves. The exemplum has two purposes: to make Christians understand elevated moral truths and to facilitate the preparation of the sermon.<sup>21</sup> The first purpose is unnecessary to the miracles and no such "edification" is attempted. The second purpose is structurally inappropriate. But the importance of the exempla in relation to the miracle collections is easily evident: Jacques de Vitry was influenced by the French translation of the Disciplina Clericalis,<sup>22</sup> whose structure is related to the miracle stories.

The author of the Disciplina Clericalis, Pedro Alfonso, was an Aragonese Jew who converted to Catholicism in 1106. Through the use of dialogues, the book's central purpose is

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<sup>19</sup>Welter, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 79-80.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

explained: to prove that Christianity is the superior religion, and thereby to win souls through conversions such as the author's. The dialogues are between a father and son, written in Latin prose, for the purpose of instruction. Although there have been many editions and translations of this book, it is interesting to note that the English translator of the Legenda Aurea, William Caxton, did an altered version in English of the Disciplina Clericalis that appeared in 1484.<sup>23</sup>

The book is organized within a definite structure. It begins with a prologue, explaining the author's purpose, and is followed by three short moralizing pieces, De timore Dei, De vpocrisi, De formica--De gayo--De cane. These are followed by thirty-four exempla, separate short narratives of one or two pages each, some of which are internally divided by subheadings. The book ends with an epilogue. The stories are not related thematically nor placed in order according to theme, and like Voragine's, Berceo's and Gautier's work, have a single unifying factor that brings the stories in the collection together. In the case of the Disciplina Clericalis, the unifying factor is not Mary, however, as she is never mentioned. It is the intention of religious edification.

In the Prologue, the author justifies his Catholic faith and the necessity of writing such a book for the moral edification of those who may not know what he already knows:

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<sup>23</sup>Pedro Alfonso, Disciplina Clericalis, ed. and trans. Angel González Palencia (Madrid: 1948), intro. pp. xix-xx.

Había pensado también en la fragilidad de la condición humana, que necesita recibir la instrucción poco a poco, y con dulzura y suavidad, y de modo que permita recordar fácilmente lo aprendido. 'Por ello---dice---compuse yo este pequeño libro, tomándolo en parte de los proverbios de los filósofos y de sus correcciones; en parte, de proverbios y ejemplos de los árabes, de fábulas y versos y, finalmente, de semejanzas de animales y de aves.'" 24

The title itself implies that even the cleric can benefit from the study of this book. The book is divided into three principal parts: first, the moral characteristics of the human being; second, a stern warning against the dangers of women; and third, of social and political relationships among men.<sup>25</sup>

The stories show a great Oriental influence. The translator notes that the syntax is more Semitic than Latin in its structure.<sup>26</sup> Pedro Alfonso's apologies can be traced to Calila y Dimna and the Engaños de mujeres, other Spanish collections of moralizing short narratives with strong Oriental influences. The Disciplina Clericalis is serious in tone, and sometimes tends to be overly pedantic, never demonstrating the good-natured, often bawdy humor of a writer such as Berceo.

As we have mentioned, the collection of short narratives known as Calila y Dimna is also of special interest in considering the type of book with a Hispanic-Oriental background that fits into this genre. Although the actual credit for the translation of the Spanish edition of the book has been in doubt, it is generally agreed that Alfonso el Sabio received the finished

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. xxii-xxiii.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. xxii-xxiii.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. xxvi-xxvii.

work from his translators in 1251, and that he should be considered to be the sponsor of the work.<sup>27</sup> Calila y Dimna is considered to be the first oriental story collection to be translated into a western vernacular language.<sup>28</sup>

The purpose of these stories, written in prose, is didactic as well as entertaining. The translator explains the derivation of the book's structure:

The title means 'the five books', and most of the older versions and translations keep this division, although the last two books are much shorter than the first three. All the 'books' contain at least one story, and usually more, which are 'emboxed in the main story, called the frame-story'. Sometimes there is a double emboxment; another story is inserted in an 'emboxed' story. Moreover, the work begins with a brief introduction in which as in a frame all five books are regarded as 'emboxed'.<sup>29</sup>

The stories are made up of a mixture of prose and verse stanzas, each of which serves a different purpose. The unravelling of the plot is done almost completely in prose; the stanzas of verse are "proverbial or 'gnomic' aphorisms" used to introduce stories or to summarize their moral.<sup>30</sup> Like phrases found in Berceo and Gautier, the author often makes a transition with the words "and it is said."

The structure in which the stories appear, in our edition of Calila y Dimna, is the following: first, a long moralizing

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<sup>27</sup>John Esten Keller, Alfonso X, el Sabio (New York: 1967), pp. 48-52.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>29</sup>The Panchatantra, trans. Franklin Edgerton (New Jersey: 1965), intro. p. 10.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

prologue by the author speaking of the rewards of good and the pitfalls of evil; next Book I (here the "books" are really equivalent to small chapters in length) containing seventeen short fables, almost all of which deal with animals; Book II containing five such short narratives; Books III-IV concerned with similar themes, and an epilogue. The approximate length of the text is five hundred pages.<sup>31</sup>

One of the most interesting things that sets Calila y Dimna apart from the other collections of short narratives of different structural types is the linking of stories from one to another. Following the oriental tradition of the told tale, these stories are not really separate narratives, but one long dialogue with other characters participating. This format brings to mind the collection The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night, among the most famous storybooks in literature. The stories were intended to be heard rather than read, and the structure is such that the listener keeps his interest. The central character, the Persian ruler Shahriyar, does not trust women, and after taking a new wife every night, has her executed the following morning. But the shrewd princess Shahrazad keeps herself alive by entertaining him with stories that naturally lead one into the next, so the monarch cannot notice that a single story has ended. In this way, the listener, as well as the reader, is held in rapt attention.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Abdallah Ibn Almokaffa, Calila y Dimna, trans. Antonio Chalita Sfair (Colombia: 1965), 2 vols.

<sup>32</sup> The Book of a Thousand Nights and One Night, ed. E. Powys Mathers (London: 1923), 16 vols.

The method of interweaving one story into another, as seen in Calila y Dimna and The Book of a Thousand Nights and One Night is considered to be a traditional Oriental manner of story-telling, originating from an oral tradition. It is interesting to find a pattern similar to this in a Western work, Ovid's Metamorphoses. Ovid's is the only collection of short narratives that we have considered in western literature in which one story actually becomes part of the next in the telling. This does not seem to be a standard procedure in the West in the thirteenth century. The unifying factor in Ovid's book is transformation and change, as the title implies.<sup>33</sup> In the miracles, transformation and change is a definitive act that ends each story. The stories cannot continue into each other because of the nature of the subject matter.

The Cantigas de Santa María of Alfonso el Sabio, however, must be considered in a separate structural category. They share with Gautier and Berceo the use of Mary as the most significant unifying element, and all the pieces in Alfonso's collection are dedicated to her or are about her. But Alfonso's choice of the cantiga as the vehicle by which he will tell his stories is an unusual one as this is a lyric form, never used before or since in a distinctively narrative way. The most

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<sup>33</sup>Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. Arthur Golding, ed. John Frederick Nims (New York: 1965), intro. p. xvii.

popular cantigas that survive are the early Portuguese cantigas d'amor and cantigas d'amigo, in which the sorrows of platonic love and lover's absences are contemplated, usually by a sole speaker, and there is no dramatic action or narrative.

Alfonso el Sabio (1221-1284) occupies a special place in the history of Spanish letters as his court at Toledo was the literary hub of Spain and most of the western world in the thirteenth century. His strongest literary attribute was not the ability to create, but the talent to organize, encourage, and support an enormous variety of literary compilations, translations, and studies. His most famous work, Las siete partidas, is a compendium of social and legislative commentaries that is considered to be one of the most important works of the Middle Ages. It was also Alfonso's enthusiasm that produced the universal history, Grande e General Historia, and an impressive history of Spain, Estoria de España o Primeira Cronica General, considered to be a vital document. Strongly representative of the encyclopedic trend of the thirteenth century, Alfonso borrowed from the famous Speculum Historiale of Vincent de Beauvais, among many other sources.<sup>34</sup> His other famous works include Cantigas Profanas, an example of lyric poetry that uses gallego-portugués as its language of expression. Alfonso's wide variety of interests also inspired works as varied as Los Libros de Astronomía, El Lapidario, Los Libros de Ajedrez, Dados y Tablas, Una Carta y Dos Testamentos, and the famous Cantigas de Santa María.

There is little doubt that the Cantigas were written

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<sup>34</sup>Keller, p. 75.



to be sung to musical accompaniment.<sup>35</sup> This intention is an important unifying factor, as is the dedication of all the cantigas to Mary. The individual cantigas are written in gallego-portugués, the dialect of the extreme western section of Spain bordering on Portugal, and appear in varied meters, with the form of the zéjel prevailing. The zéjel, an early Arabic form, consists of three parts: an estribillo, or two-line refrain, a stanza of three monorhymed verses, and a fourth verse rhyming with the estribillo. There are four hundred twenty-seven poems in the collection, two hundred seventy-three of which are narrative. After each ten narrative poems is a loor, a lyric non-narrative in praise of Mary. These loores, at prescribed intervals, are not unlike Gautier's chansons in purpose and content. Unlike material found in any of the books previously mentioned, however, certain cantigas deal with specific contemporary events involving Alfonso himself. These are hunting episodes, illnesses, petitions made to Mary by the King, all material inserted in no specific or formal order.

Like Gautier and Berceo, Alfonso begins his collection with a prologue that explains his intentions. Alfonso speaks in the first person, as do the other authors, but unlike them, he adheres to the lyric tradition in never identifying himself by name. There is no specific thematic order in the organization of the Cantigas. Most of the themes are similar to those found in Voragine, Berceo, and Gautier, but there is no specific pattern

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<sup>35</sup>Keller, p. 65.

or cohesiveness within the book itself. We can therefore draw a familiar conclusion: that the unifying structural and thematic factor of the Cantigas is the Virgin herself.

Gautier de Coinci's Miracles de Nostre Dame is unified by the same principle as Alfonso's collection. Mary's miracles are the purpose of the collection, and Gautier is very devoted to her. His "great passion for her was the one passion which dominated his life."<sup>36</sup> Gautier was very representative of the educated cleric of his time. He was born in about 1177, his surname being derived from Coigny-l'Abbaye, a small village between Soissons and Château-Thierry. He was from a poor family, but was permitted to enter the abbey of Saint-Médard after Innocent III began to make exceptions for boys from families with distinctions other than monetary ones. At this abbey at Soissons, Gautier became a monk in 1193. He was a superior student, strongly inclined toward music. Many musical references and allusions are to be found in the Miracles. His musical ability was so extraordinary that M. Chailley comments: "'On observe dans sa façon de traiter les melodies reçues un tact et un respect de la prosodie qui sont d'un musicien sensible, et que peu d'auteurs medievaux, voire de trouvères, possederont a ce degré.'"<sup>37</sup> It is interesting that Alfonso el Sabio also shared this musical ability, as his Cantigas de Santa María were written to be sung, as we shall see later.

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<sup>36</sup>Gripkey, p. 165.

<sup>37</sup>Gautier de Coinci, Miracles de Nostre Dame, ed. Frédéric Koenig, 4 vols. (Paris and Geneva: 1966-1970), I, intro. p. xxii.

Gautier became prior of Vic in 1214. He also became guardian of the relics of Saint Léocade, whose importance is second only to Mary's in the Miracles. He later became prior of Saint-Médard de Soissons, and began the first book of the Miracles in 1218. The completion of the work took at least ten years due to Gautier's other responsibilities. He continued his work on the second book between 1223 and 1227.<sup>38</sup> Although one imagines that these miracle stories had a popular audience because of their theme, both the close reading of these highly sophisticated stories and the clues provided by Gautier himself show us that they were probably intended for learned clerics and laymen, thereby limiting his readers to a certain class of society. Koenig uses II Miracle 20 (Vilain que savait...) as an example of Gautier's generally anti-popular sentiments.<sup>39</sup>

Gautier's Miracles de Nostre Dame share common themes with the Marian miracles in the Legenda, but there is very little overall structural similarity between the collections. Gautier's work does not adhere to any pattern as specific as that of the Church calendar, nor is he concerned with saints' lives or their respective miracles if they do not directly pertain to a story in which Mary is predominant. Gautier's choice of title is a significant starting point. H. P. Ahsmann, in his study of thirteenth century French Marian literature, specifically refers to the religious plays of the fourteenth century as miracles. When dealing with

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. xviii-xxx.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. xxvii.

the short narrative of the thirteenth century, Ahsmann calls them légendes. Gautier's work, Miracles de Nostre Dame, is composed of narrative stories in medieval French verse, classified as miracles, and lyric chansons. There are no dramatic pieces included in the collection.

The organization of Gautier's work is orderly and precise. The author divides his work into two books. Book I is composed of the first prologue, du livre premier, which identifies the author<sup>40</sup> and explains that his purpose is not to create, but to translate already familiar stories in rhyme and meter<sup>41</sup> as he continues in his task of praising the Virgin. The second prologue further explains his intentions and his devotion to Mary. Both of these prologues are set in verse, as are all his miracle stories, but neither contains a narrative miracle. Next come seven chansons of varied lengths in praise of Mary. Then the first miracle begins (numbered 10 by Koenig) the story of Theophilus. This long narrative (2092 lines) is followed by thirty-four narrative miracle stories of varying length and finally by three more chansons, in honor of Saint Léocade, that end Book I. Book II begins with its own prologue, repeating the purpose of the author and the glories of Mary. As in the first book, the prologue is followed by seven chansons and then by twenty-four narrative miracles. The second book ends with an epilogue, which serves as a summary of the author's effort throughout the work. The epilogue is followed by a moralizing piece, De la misere d'omme et de fame et de la doutance qu'on doit avoir

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., I, 19, vv. 328-30.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., I, 1, vv. 4-7.

de morir, one of Gautier's longer works (2630 lines). This is followed by the prologue to the salus, lyric poems exalting Mary, each stanza containing four lines. This prologue is devoted in part to the play on words Ave-Eva, the next one to the letters M-A-R-I-A and so on. The salus contain 664 lines and are followed by a chanson, and then, finally, by four prières, also of a lyrical, non-narrative nature. The last prière in the book is the Item Galterus ad Dominum. The combined length of the four volumes of text is 36,285 lines.

Certain conclusions can be drawn from Gautier's rather complex outline. First, each book begins with a prologue, followed by seven chansons and a number of narrative miracles. In this way, the narratives are interrupted at certain regular intervals by the lyric poems. Second, the material appearing after the epilogue is in no way derivative from the structure of the rest of the book. Third, there is no thematic order to be found among the narrative miracles, in neither a comparison of the two books of the Miracles nor in the stories to be found within a single book. The stories are thematically different from each other in the sequence in which they are presented. The same difference exists in the individual Marian anecdotes within a single feast day in the Legenda Aurea. We can therefore conclude that, fourth, the Virgin herself is the only unifying structural force in the collection of poems and stories in this complex progression of Gautier's Miracles. Unlike the Legenda Aurea, the Miracles de Nostre Dame is composed of four volumes of narrative and poetry dedicated to

Mary alone. Any appearance of other saints serves merely as an addition to the central story; the saints' importance are only relevant to their relationship to the Virgin in the development of the miracle. Unlike Voragine, who distributes his religious devotion evenly, Gautier writes only of Mary.

Berceo's Milagros de Nuestra Señora is closer to Gautier's book in its structure than to any of the other collections mentioned, in that it is a book completely devoted to the telling of Marian miracles. Although its content and its structural plan are less complex and formal than Gautier's, Mary is still the unifying source of inspiration. Berceo's life, while different than Gautier's, was also devoted to the writing of religious verse. Gonzalo de Berceo was born at the end of the twelfth century, in Berceo, La Rioja, from which he took his name. He received his clerical education at the monastery of San Millán. Aside from his principal work, Milagros de Nuestra Señora, he dedicated other writings to the Virgin: Duelo de la Virgen el día de la Pasión de su Fijo and Loores de Nuestra Señora, a set of lyric devotional poems. His other works are also religious in nature: Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos, Vida de San Millán and Vida de Santa Oria, as well as the Martirio de San Lorenzo, and El sacrificio de la misa o Los signos que aparecerán antes del Juicio.

Berceo, the "clérigo ajuglarado," was so called because he combined the oral, popular elements of epic poetry of the time with a specific, studied style, known as "mester de

clerecía." The mester de clerecía is a type of poetry that clerics began composing in Spain in the twelfth century. It is composed of strophes of four alexandrine verses of fourteen syllables with the same consonant, called "cuaderna vía."<sup>42</sup> Yet, as sophisticated as this manner of poetry is, it is known that the Milagros were appreciated by people of all stations. It does not seem that Berceo wrote for as learned an audience as Gautier.<sup>43</sup>

Unlike Gautier, Berceo's Milagros demonstrates a simpler idea, although the two titles bespeak the same purpose, as Berceo's is only one small volume of some two hundred pages, containing twenty-five verse narrative stories, the longest of which, Theophilus, is only six hundred sixty-one lines. There are no lyric poems interspersed within the stories, and no epilogue at the end, although the prologue is like Gautier's in its statement of purpose, the show of humility by the author and the invocation of Mary. The only order to be found in Berceo's book, insofar as the placement of the stories is concerned, is that of the longer stories appearing toward the end of the book. As in Gautier, but

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<sup>42</sup>Menéndez y Pelayo define it this way: "...el mester de clerecía, socialmente considerado, no fue nunca ni la poesía del pueblo, ni la poesía de la aristocracia militar, ni la poesía de las fiestas palaciegas, sino la poesía de los monasterios y de las nacientes universidades o estudios generales." Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, Antología de los poetas líricos castellanos desde la formación del idioma hasta nuestros días, 14 tomos (Santander: 1944) I, 153-54.

This is the widely accepted explanation of the mester de clerecía. But one must consider that Menéndez y Pelayo emphasizes that his explanation of the mester de clerecía is "socialmente considerado." Berceo and the mester de clerecía cannot be simply united as priest to monastic literary movement. Berceo, while strongly identifiable with the mester de clerecía, is equally important in his linking of it to the mester de juglaría.

<sup>43</sup>Joaquín Artilles, Los recursos literarios de Berceo (Madrid: 1968), p. 17.

unlike Voragine, the author's prologue not only defines his purpose, but also identifies the author by name.<sup>44</sup>

The basic dramatic personage in Berceo's stories is Mary alone; when other saints appear they do so only at her bidding or to supplement the action in a miracle devoted to her. The lack of any other thematic unity and the exclusive importance of Mary's presence lead us to the conclusion that the Virgin is again the unifying structural and thematic force of the book: "Un primer elemento unificador del poema es la presencia de un protagonista central, a la manera de los poemas épicos. Un segundo elemento es la materia o núcleo esencial de la obra, es decir el milagro...Un tercer elemento de unidad puede considerarse la conciliación de contrastantes actitudes contemplativas, ya que el poeta capta y funde en una visión unitaria lo real y lo ideal, lo humano y lo divino."<sup>45</sup> It is also significant that Berceo's devotion is expressly dedicated to Mary alone. He treats the other saints as dramatic characters, but only as ancillary to Mary. As in Gautier, there is a radical departure from the expression of varied hagiography shown in the Legenda Aurea.

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<sup>44</sup>Gonzalo de Berceo, Milagros de Nuestra Señora (Madrid: 1964), p. 1 stanza 2.

<sup>45</sup>Carmelo Gariano, Análisis estilístico de los "Milagros de Nuestra Señora" de Berceo (Madrid: 1971), p. 180.



Collections of short narratives do not represent the only existing Marian stories. There are various uncollected French didactic stories, some of which are about Mary, written in verse.<sup>46</sup> The stories range in length from eight to forty pages and share many common themes with the collected stories.<sup>47</sup> In the stories in which Mary does appear, her role is neither as integral to the story nor as appealing to the reader as is her role in the collected short narratives.

Other uncollected short French narratives, specifically non-Marian in content, are the fabliaux. These stories were never collected, and appeared as narrative poems between the twelfth century and the beginning of the fourteenth. The fabliaux are verse compositions, intended for recitation, and definitely not intended to fit into the framework of a collection.<sup>48</sup> The emphasis is always on dialogue, usually based on an anecdote or joke. Unlike the Marian narratives, there is little or no physical or psychological description. The actors are always everyday lay figures, and it is their speeches that reveal the use of detail that is lacking in description or motivation.<sup>49</sup> Many of the fabliaux can be traced to the Disciplina Clericalis

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<sup>46</sup> Achille Jubinal, ed. Nouveau recueil de contes, dits fabliaux et autres pièces inédites des XIII<sup>e</sup>, XIV<sup>e</sup> et XV<sup>e</sup> siècles. 2 vols. (Paris: 1839, 1842).

<sup>47</sup> i.e. C'est le dit de la Borjoise de Narbonne, Ibid., I, 33-41. Le dit du petit juitel, Ibid., I, 231-37. There are others with similar themes in the collection.

<sup>48</sup> T. B. W. Reid, ed. Twelve Fabliaux (Manchester: 1958), p. ix.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. xi-xii.

with its emphasis on secular stories and everyday people.<sup>50</sup> But the fabliaux are essentially satirical in intent and often resemble the exempla in their parody of the social classes.<sup>51</sup> Such social stratification is always found in the Marian narratives, while the element of satire is seen less frequently.

Another type of uncollected French short narrative is the lai. This is a verse composition dealing with courtly and magical subjects. Such stories flourished between 1170 and 1250. The length of the pieces varies greatly, from one hundred eighteen to 9234 lines.<sup>52</sup> Unlike the Marian stories, the only supernatural characters from an extra-terrestrial world are fairies and spirits. All events derive from the court and the theme of courtly love in a chivalric society. While most lais are uncollected, there is an unusual collection of lais by Marie de France. Eleven of the twelve lais have a conclusion that suggests that the stories are grouped as a series made from poems.<sup>53</sup> While the fabliau deals with everyday, common characters, the lai deals usually with the aristocracy at court. Such an omission of certain social classes is totally unlike the material of the Marian miracles.

In our overall discussion of the possible structures

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<sup>50</sup> Jean Rychner, "Les fabliaux: genre, styles, publics" in La littérature narrative d'imagination, Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg, Centre de Philologie Romane (Paris: 1961), 41-54, pp. 42-43.

<sup>51</sup> Welter, p. 103.

<sup>52</sup> Jean Frappier, "Remarques sur la structure du lai, essai de définition et de classement" in La littérature narrative d'imagination, 23-39, pp. 23-24.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp. 30-31. c.f. Marie de France, Lais, ed. Jeanne Lods (Paris: 1959).

of collected thirteenth century short narratives, we have seen three loose groupings emerge which define and separate the different books under consideration. The first group of books, the Legenda Aurea, Exempla and Gesta Romanorum, are all written in Latin prose, in the form of short structured paragraphs. More important, the Exempla and the Gesta Romanorum contain no dialogue at all, while the Legenda Aurea uses dialogue infrequently. These stories, overall, are almost completely devoid of dramatic action and seem one-dimensional, as they lack vitality and theatricality. The purpose of these stories is to further the moral edification of the reader, a purpose which is firmly adhered to without any attempt at entertainment.

A second group of books, including the Disciplina Clericalis, Calila y Dimna, Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night, and Metamorphoses, contains collections of stories whose method links one story to another by means of heavy reliance on dialogue. The fact that the characters tell the story and therefore have speaking parts lends a strong value of entertainment to otherwise didactic collections of moralizing tales and fables. While these two groups of collections of short narratives do not contain Marian miracles, they are integral to a structural consideration of the miracle collections because they also contain a dominant unifying factor, either the purpose of moral edification, of entertainment, or a combination of both.

The third broad grouping of these books includes only those concerned with Marian miracles: the works of Berceo, Gautier, and Alfonso. Not only is Mary the unifying factor in these story collections, but there is extensive use of dialogue as well as dramatic action, and interchange between characters.

This type of story approaches theater, due to its heavy reliance on visual elements and detailed characterization.

We have seen that the external structure of a collection of short narratives has little or no bearing on the themes dealt with within the collection. There is usually no specific thematic order for these stories, even in the Marian collections where the Virgin is the unifying factor. The frequency with which certain themes are utilized by an author is more a matter of medieval custom than of the author's originality, as most of these collections and the stories found within them are new versions of already popular tales. The division of these themes into categories will show some significant characteristics of the authors writing Marian miracles who choose them: why one category of themes is given great coverage by one author and all but ignored by another is a mark of the author's originality at a time when originality was not a writer's primary consideration. Such a study of themes will also clarify the medieval author's perspective of the society in which he lived.

## CHAPTER TWO: AVAILABILITY OF THEMES IN MARIAN MIRACLES

It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss the availability and frequency of Marian themes in Gautier, Voragine, Berceo and Alfonso, not from a comparative point of view by author, but from the perspective of all these miracles devoted to Mary divided by thematic category. The broad scope of these themes presents us with our own speculum of life in the thirteenth century. One critic's comments concerning the French sermons of this period are applicable to the entire scope of themes in the miracles:

The stories, or exempla, with which the sermons are embellished come from all kinds of sources--fables and folk-lore, bestiaries, lives of saints, historical manuals, and personal experiences--and comprise the greatest variety of legends and miracles and contemporary anecdotes, so that they afford a most valuable insight into the popular religion and superstitions of their day, besides preserving a considerable amount of curious information concerning the manners and customs of all classes of society.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the Marian miracles can logically be placed in more than one category according to theme, as many of the characters or events encompass more than one basic division within these stories. It is our intention to classify these miracles according to theme, but not by the nature of the religious material. Our categories of themes fall into two groups. First, four categories will be established according to the social status of the characters most essential to the development of the plot. This is a valuable division

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<sup>1</sup>Charles H. Haskins, Studies in Medieval Culture (Oxford: 1929), p. 39.

as much of medieval literature, and especially the Marian miracles, are a reflection of a clearly stratified medieval society. Second, categories will express the central interest of specific stories, interests such as the intercession of Mary, importance of saints, use of relics or sacred objects, liturgical texts, and the role of the Jew.

A great number of Marian miracles found in all four authors deal with the Virgin's helping the poor, ignorant layman who is so devoted to her. Such humble people with few material possessions found an appropriate solace in Mary when faced with a society that had little sympathy for their condition. Class conflicts in the Marian stories are often based on the medieval theme of money and the abuse of wealth. Such problems are examined in social, economic and moral divisions. Juxtaposed to the evils of money is often the virtue of humility, a virtue prized above all others in Christian didactic literature. The devoted poor man is always seen as superior to the cynical rich man, and there seems to be a scarcity of devoted rich men and women. The poor man is often used as the paragon of virtue in order to shame the aristocratic reader. Berceo's Milagros de Nuestra Señora is the richest source of Marian miracles dealing specifically with people of humble origins, whether laymen or clergy. Voragine's Legenda Aurea is also reflective of a similar attitude, as about half of its nineteen Marian stories deal with the poor, but Voragine's lack of detail and specificity make Berceo's stories a better example.

Of Berceo's twenty-five Milagros, nineteen deal in some way with people of the lower classes. An example of a miracle story devoted to such a character is El pobre caritativo, a very short, simple story of a poor man who always shared what little he had:

Era un omne pobre que vivie de raziones,  
Non avie otras rendas nin otras furciones,  
Fuera quanto lavrava esto poccas sazones,  
Tenie en su alzado bien poccas pepones.<sup>2</sup>

It is of utmost importance to the development of the story that the reader know from the beginning that the poor man shared his few coins with the specific intention of pleasing the Virgin. When he is about to die, Mary appears to him, but after we are told of the purpose of his charitable acts:

Por ganar la Gloriosa que el mucho amava,  
Partiello con los pobres todo quanto ganava...<sup>3</sup>

She says:

'Ca parties tus almosnas, dizies Ave Maria  
Porque lo fazies todo yo bien lo entendia.'<sup>4</sup>

Mary promises to take his soul to her Son's kingdom and does so, as Berceo reminds the reader that good deeds bring a happy ending.

The poor man was a good, gentle soul, but there is also a complete array of scalawags, thieves and immoral characters of all sorts that the Virgin rescues because of their previous devotion. A famous example of this type of character is

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<sup>2</sup>Berceo, p. 35, stanza 132.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., stanza 133.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 36, stanza 135.

Gautier's thief in Dou larron pendus que Nostre Dame soustint par deuz jors.<sup>5</sup> Only approximately thirty percent of the miracles in Gautier's four volume collection deal with a lower class character, as this type of person is not as popular in his stories as in Berceo's. This miracle deals with a thief who is sentenced to hang for his crimes. Although a scofflaw, he has always been especially devoted to Mary. When he is placed on the scaffold, Mary holds him up for two days, so that the hanging has no effect. The thief, once he realizes what has happened, tells the townspeople that it is useless to try and execute him:

'Fuiez! fuiez! Ne vaut nient  
 Bien sachiez tuit a esclient  
 Que ma dame sainte Marie  
 En secors m'est et en aie.  
 La douce dame me maintient  
 Et sor ma gorge sa main tient.  
 La douce dame debonaire  
 Ne me consent nul mal affaire.'<sup>6</sup>

The thief, so touched by the miracle, decides to enter a monastery. Such a solution is often a formulaic ending in Marian miracles, in which a character who has always been devoted to Mary proves his devotion after the miracle by entering a monastic order in order to be free of worldly considerations. Gautier underlines Mary's special affection for sinners:

La mere Dieu nul pecheur,  
 Tant sort pechierres, ne degete.<sup>7</sup>

He then explains her healing effect on the troubled soul as

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<sup>5</sup>c.f. Berceo, Milagro VI; Voragine, De nativitate..., p.592; Alfonso, Cantiga XIII.

<sup>6</sup>Gautier, II, 287, vv. 57-64.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 288, vv. 88-89.



being like that of an efficient doctor's on the body, as both types of afflictions are "maladies." In Berceo's stories, however, it seems that the Virgin is always ready and willing to forgive through an almost tacit understanding and acceptance--she expects nothing in return--while in Gautier's miracles the condition of penitence is to be valued above all else.<sup>8</sup>

Alfonso's Cantigas are very different from Gautier's Miracles in form and content, but there is a definite similarity in both authors' choice of theme. Of the two hundred seventy-three narrative cantigas in Alfonso's collection, less than thirty percent deal with the common man in ordinary circumstances. One exception is the cantiga entitled Como Santa Maria guardou de morte un ome bõo en Prazença d'un touro que veéra polo matar (CXLIV). While there is a priest involved in the story, the emphasis is on the character of the poor man who was so devoted to Mary. A gentleman of the village is about to be married, and orders a wild bull to run through the plaza where the poor man lives as part of the celebration. After receiving a message from a clergyman friend, the poor man leaves his house. Then the bull appears:

En el sayu por yr alá, enton  
e o touro leixou-ss yr de randon  
a ele polo ferir mui felon,  
por ll' os cornos pelas costas meter...<sup>9</sup>

His priest friend asks for Mary's help, she appears, and as a result:

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<sup>8</sup>Ahsmann, pp. 87-88.

<sup>9</sup>Alfonso, II, 121-122.

...en atal guisa o acorreu,  
 que o touro log' en terra caeu,  
 et todo-los quatro pees tendeu  
 assi como sse quisesse morrer...  
 E o touro s'ergeu, et dessa vez  
 nunca depois a null' ome mal fez...<sup>10</sup>

As in Berceo's El pobre caritativo, Alfonso's story deals with a good, poor man who has no need to repent or prove his devotion. (Alfonso repeatedly uses the adjective "bõo" throughout the cantiga.) The key to the Virgin's immediate response to help the man in question is the unfailing devotion he has shown Mary, a devotion Alfonso has made clear at the beginning of the story.

A second division of Marian miracles by social class includes stories about the upper class laity, be they people of noble family or abundant material wealth. As in our first category, the stories are shared between good and bad people. Inevitably, in a conflict between a rich man and a poor man (a story representing a mixture of social classes in their various levels) the poor man always wins Mary's favor. Gautier's Dou riche et de la veve fame, a perfect example of such a conflict, bases its central action around the forces of evil materialism and pious poverty, a favorite medieval theme. Gautier begins to unravel the plot, using the story itself as a chastisement against greed and usury:

En la pariusse a ce provoivre  
 Tout en un jor, c'en est la voire,  
 Une fame et uns hom morurent,  
 Mais leur fins mout diverses furent.  
 La fame ert povre et li hom riches,  
 Useriers, fors, avers et chiches.<sup>11</sup>

The widow, who is so poor that she suffers from hunger

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., II, 121-122.

<sup>11</sup>Gautier, II, 158, vv. 13-18.

and thirst, uses her last bit of money and

S'achatoit une chandillete;  
Lors si l'offroit la bone fame  
En l'oneur Dieu et Nostre Dame.<sup>12</sup>

While the poor widow is alone in her misery, the townspeople and all the priests have rushed to the deathbed of the usurer, hoping to benefit from his passing. Although the widow is suffering, she never forgets her devotion to Mary and continues to pray to her. No priest can be bothered with her, as she is poor:

Li prestres eut tost la povre fame  
Por l'usurier arriere mise,  
Car espris fu de covoitouse.  
Mout durement estoit engrant  
Que riche lais eüst et grant,  
Peu li chaloit de l'autre affaire.<sup>13</sup>

One humble priest feels sorry for the widow and finally appears at her house. He is amazed to see the sick woman in bed, covered with a beautiful blanket, and surrounded by twelve virgins. But even more astonishing is the presence of Mary, who is mopping the widow's brow with a delicately embroidered towel. When the Virgin sees the priest she tells him:

Or tost, biaux clers, fait Nostre Dame,  
Confessez c'est bonne fame,  
Et puis après tout sanz freür  
Recevera le Sauveür  
Qui char et sanc volt en moi penre.<sup>14</sup>

Things are very different at the usurer's house. For all his material possessions and the sycophants that surround

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., vv. 38-40.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 164, vv. 168-173.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 167, vv. 253-257.

him, he is dying frightened and struggling. Gautier gives an elaborate description of the usurer's behavior on his deathbed. Then the scene shifts back to the widow's house as Mary and the angels take the poor woman's soul to heaven. It is often formulaic to the ending of Gautier's miracles for the author to address his readers to again drive home the moralizing point that is the essential purpose of the story:

Povres hom et tu, povres fame,  
 Qui ce myracles orras conter,  
 Legierement te dois donter  
 A covoitier malvais avoir.  
 Par ce myracle puez savoir  
 Que mainte ame trebuche et mainne  
 Ou fons d'enfer richece humaine  
 Et povretez sauve mainte ame.  
 Milz ama Diex la povre fame  
 Que l'userier qui tant avoit  
 Dehiers que nombre n'en savoit.<sup>15</sup>

Another perspective within the same thematic category deals with people favored by their position in society, such as the knight, who shows humility by his special devotion to Mary while never having to repent for any previous wrongdoing. Such a story appears in Voragine's De nativitate beatae Mariae virginis. A knight is about to go off and joust in a tournament, but first takes time to go to the monastery and hear all the masses being said for Mary for that day. He is later successful in his endeavors, and is so moved by his victory that the Virgin has granted him that "...ad monasterium rediens fillo virginis de caetero militavit."<sup>16</sup> It is therefore also thematically possible for a secular person to enter a monastery out of devotion to Mary even if he has no need to repent.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 177, vv. 498-508.

<sup>16</sup>Voragine, pp. 590-91.

One of Alfonso's Cantigas, Como a moller que o marido leixara en comenda a Santa Maria, nos podo a çapata que lle dera seu entendedor meter no pee nen descalçala-a (LXIV), deals with a knight in a more worldly situation. An Aragonese nobleman asks the Virgin to protect his wife while he goes off to war. The description of their parting, a standard lyric medieval theme, brings to mind the separation of El Cid and Ximena:

Outro día foron amobos a missa oir  
e pois foi dita, u se lle quis él espedir,  
chorand', enton ela, lle começou a pedir  
que lle dësse guarda porque ouuess' a catar...

E ar ele, chorando muito dos ollos seus,  
mostrou-ll' a omagen da Virgin Madre de Deus  
et disse-ll,' :--'Amiga, nunca os pecados meus  
sejan perdôados, se vos a outri vou dar...'17

Another man, in love with the knight's wife, sends a Celestina-like go-between to win the young woman with a gift of new shoes of extraordinary beauty. The wife accepts, but finds that she cannot take off her own shoes to put on the new ones. This condition continues for all the time that the knight is gone. When he returns, he gives thanks to Mary, and his wife's shoes come off:

O cavaleiro disse--'Dona, desto me praz,  
e sobr' esto nunca averemos senon paz;  
ca sei que Santa Maria en que todo ben jaz,  
vos guardou.' E, a çapata lle foi en tirar

Quen mui bien quiser o que ama guardar...18

The third category we have chosen, that of miracle stories concerning the lower clergy, contains the greatest

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<sup>17</sup>Alfonso, I, 183.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., I, 185.

number of miracles when the four authors are considered as a whole. It is important to make the distinction that the writers themselves make: the division of the clergy into two groups depends not as much on their rank in the ecclesiastical hierarchy (although most of the stories in this group deal with simple priests) as on their humility and the lack of importance they place on worldly possessions.

An example of a miracle of this type is contained in Voragine's De assumptione sanctae Mariae virginis. The very simple story is an example of Marian devotion rewarded. A cleric, devoted to Mary, wants to comfort her about the five wounds of Christ, and tries to do so through his prayers. He falls ill and is frightened. The Virgin appears, telling him that he has nothing to fear, as she will offer him eternal protection.<sup>19</sup>

Gautier deals with a similar type of devotion in Dou clerc mort en cui boche on trova la flor. This story provides the reader with a double perspective, that of the "sinner" who, despite all his faults, is devoted to Mary, as in the lay miracles; and the frequent preference of Mary for the lower clergy in an ecclesiastical dispute. When the priest dies, the Church fathers order that he not be accorded a proper burial because of his past behavior:

'C'est a bon droit qu'il est ocis,  
Ce dist chascuns. Toute sa vie  
A il usee em puterie.'<sup>20</sup>

The other brothers order that the dead priest be sent out

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<sup>19</sup>Voragine, p. 513.

<sup>20</sup>Gautier, II, 110, vv. 32-34.

and buried like a common thief, but Mary, remembering the priest's unfailing devotion to her, appears and defends him:

'Ce fu li clers, fait ele, frere,  
Que fors de vostre cymetere  
L'autrier se vilment enfoïstes.  
Assez de honte li feïstes  
Trente jors a, ne plus ne mains.  
Soventes fois a jointes mains  
S'agenoilla devant m'ymage.'<sup>21</sup>

The other priests become frightened at her harsh words and go at once to fulfill her command for a proper burial. When they open the coffin, they see that a miracle has occurred: a fresh, live flower is in the dead priest's mouth, and he seems very much alive in his final rest, as he is at peace. The Virgin has not only proven her point by countermanding the orders of the superiors, but has given an unmistakeable sign of her reward for the dead brother's devotion.

In this same category, a delightful example is Berceo's colorful El clérigo embriagado.<sup>22</sup> As in most of Berceo's stories, the comic, folk element is not only present but strongly emphasized. This popular sense of humor, which is often bawdy but never obscene, is not seen in Voragine, Gautier, or Alfonso, whose rare humorous sketches are often sophisticated or pedantic. In this case, a humble priest, who is very devoted to Mary, has the bad habit of drinking too much. During one such bout with the bottle, the devil appears to torment him, first in the form of a bull, and then as a lion, frightening the simple man half to death. Fortunately, Mary can easily forgive such

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 111, vv. 57-63.

<sup>22</sup>Alfonso, Cantiga LXXXII; c.f. Gautier, II, 114-121.

mortal errors, and she appears to chase the devil away. Not only is the priest grateful, but, as in other stories by Berceo, the whole town speaks of the miracle, thereby furthering the author's didactic purpose as the townspeople discuss the moral and religious value of the miracle among themselves.

Much in the same manner that Berceo enjoys stories involving the lower clergy, so does Gautier create many stories in our fourth category, those tales that criticize the upper clergy. In stories such as D'un archevesque que fu a Tholete,<sup>23</sup> the plot is inconsequential and merely a vehicle for Gautier's lengthy attack on the hypocrisy of the clergy. Of the 2356 lines, more space is devoted to criticizing clerical abuse than to development of plot. Gautier clearly points out the difference between the truly devout and the hypocritical Franciscans.<sup>24</sup>

One of Gautier's stories that does develop the theme of the often unfeeling higher clergy is D'un moigne qui ne seoit mie as eures Nostre Dame.<sup>25</sup> Because of the character of the ignorant sacristan who could only recite the hours of Mary, it would first seem that this tale belongs to our third category, that of stories concerning the lower clergy. But the important difference in this miracle is the sacristan's humiliation by his haughty prior and how Mary rectifies it.

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<sup>23</sup>Gautier, II, 5-94.

<sup>24</sup>Regalado, p. 139.

<sup>25</sup>Gautier, II, 255-60; c.f. Berceo, Milagro XII; Voragine, De annuntiatione, p. 221; Alfonso, Cantiga XXXII.



A voice comes to the sacristan in the night, asking him why he has not stood up to the prior for, excepting his ignorance, he is a model cleric. He answers that he is meek and it is not necessary for him to defend himself, as Mary is sure to remember his devotion to her in his prayers. Soon, the poor sacristan, Frere Hubers, is dying, and of course, Mary appears to him in a vision, to take him with her to heaven. She not only rewards his devotion, but also shames the holier-than-thou prior in front of the entire order of brothers. The idea of publicly shaming an important churchman seems to delight Mary as much as or more than her ability to save the sacristan. Much as the rich man always loses to the poor man in a Marian miracle, so is the powerful clergyman humbled by the simple brother.

Gautier often uses the poor layman as a paragon of virtue to humiliate and teach his more fortunate neighbor<sup>26</sup> in much the same way he supports the lower clergy against the higher clergy. Yet Gautier shows no particular affection for the poor peasant<sup>27</sup> and finds him useful only for the purpose of educating the upper classes:

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., IV, 131-132, vv. 535-51. This is one of Gautier's very few defenses of the poor, and is characteristically short.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., IV, 168-74, vv. 354-518. This is one of Gautier's more frequent attacks on "viliains" and is long and detailed, as are his attacks on the corrupt clergy. For another example of medieval invective against the lower classes see "Des XXIII manières de vilains, pièce du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle" in Poésies Gothiques, Achille Jubinal, ed. (Paris: 1834).

Il est vrai qu'il flagelle les riches et qu'il lui arrive de prendre la défense des pauvres, mais ce sont là des lieux communs de la littérature pieuse et morale. Gautier concédait aux vilains une âme que pouvait être sauvée pourvu qu'il fissent preuve d'actes de dévotion envers la Vierge, mais il montre avec évidence qu'il connaissait mal les gens du peuple, ne comprenait rien à leur manière de vivre, et avait peu de véritable sympathie pour eux.<sup>28</sup>

Berceo, on the other hand, shows little interest in recounting stories of either the upper clergy or the nobility. With the exception of El prior y el sacristán and the story of Theophilus, there are no stories in the collection dealing with the upper echelon of society. Alfonso, however, like Gautier, shows a greater interest in writing miracles involving more privileged people, as about sixty percent of his Cantigas concern the upper classes. An example of the conflict between upper and lower clergy, with the inevitable chastisement of a superior, is Como Santa Maria fez que onrrasen o cavaleiro que morreu no torneamento, porque guardou a sa festa (CXCV).<sup>29</sup> The story is thematically interesting, as it deals with both a knight, an upper class layman, and an abbess (a member of the upper clergy).

In the story, the knight is off to a tourney when he sees a pretty girl. The father promises her to him, out of poverty and desperation, but the girl is so unhappy that the gentle knight sends her to a convent. The young man is killed in the tournament and buried right there in the plaza. The novice knows nothing of the knight's death until the Virgin

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., I, intro. xxvii.

<sup>29</sup>Alfonso, II, 239-45.

appears to accompany the abbess on her visit to the knight's grave, which is now marked by a rose. The abbess refuses to go or let the novice go, until Mary reminds her of all the sins she has committed, although she is part of the Church:

E dá-lle synaes  
de pecados taes  
que fez mui mortaes,  
per que yr devia  
aa espantosa  
perdicon, porque fez maes  
come vil lixosa...<sup>30</sup>

The abbess is so intimidated that she not only gives in, but further agrees that the knight should be buried in a more suitable place. Although the young girl has suffered because of the knight's death, she is victorious in that she will never be subjected to humiliation by her abbess again. The reader now expects Mary to defend those who are of a lower social position against their haughty superiors.

These four categories of themes reflecting different classes of medieval society can be traced to earlier didactic and courtly literature. Such influences are more readily discernible in Gautier than in Berceo, as Spain did not see a flourishing of courtly poetry or didactic literature until the fifteenth century. Gautier's use of verse is more sophisticated, and unlike Berceo's, his miracles show a direct poetic influence, that of such courtly and didactic French poets as Wace, Herman de Valenciennes, Etienne de Fougères and Hélinant.<sup>31</sup>

Alfonso and Berceo, however, were probably most influenced by the Disciplina Clericalis of Pedro Alfonso, written early

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., II, 244.

<sup>31</sup>Gautier, I, intro. xxxii-xxxiii.

in the twelfth century.<sup>32</sup> Some of the thematic influence of this book on the works of Alfonso and Berceo is derived from the first of the book's three parts: "...en que trata del temor de Dios, de la hipocresía, de la sabiduría, del silencio y de la nobleza, o sea de las cualidades morales de la persona humana..."<sup>33</sup> The second section is strongly antifeminist, warning of the dangers of women, and therefore inapplicable to the Marian miracles with their glorification of Mary. The third part, dealing mostly with fables in praise of the poor man, is a valuable source for our creation of thematic categories.

The concept of the audience that these miracles enjoyed in thirteenth century Western Europe is integral to understanding the authors' intention as they began to write. Upon reading Berceo, for example, one imagines the humblest unlettered people sitting around a common fire, enjoying the Milagros. Such an imagined idea is, at best, an anachronism. We know that such literature reached only the feudal aristocracy who were dependent on the clerics for their entertainment. Private readings were festive occasions commonly held at court. Neither the twelfth century nor the thirteenth century, for all practical purposes, knew any real reading public.<sup>34</sup> Within such severe class limitations there existed stylistic limitations concerning the poet's knowledge of his audience: if he

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<sup>32</sup>Pedro Alfonso, Disciplina Clericalis, intro. xii.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., intro. xxiii.

<sup>34</sup>Erich Auerbach, "Camilla, or, The Rebirth of the Sublime" in Literary Language and its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: 1965), pp. 203-04.

addressed himself to the laity, the poet-cleric was forced to limit his works to "simple sequences of short sentences," the only lengthier phrases being enumerations on the subject matter.<sup>35</sup>

Certain conclusions about the medieval audience can be deceptive: as one reads the Legenda Aurea, for example, the simple Latin prose as well as the historical fact of the popularity of collections of saints' lives leads one to think of the book as popular among the lower classes. But the fact that the Legenda Aurea is written in Latin prose, however simple, immediately excluded the majority of medieval society from its audience. The Latin language during the Late Middle Ages had no real public except for a very privileged few.<sup>36</sup> Even those works written in the vernacular had a decidedly limited audience. It is the question of style that is often confusing to the reader of modern literature, since storytelling in verse was elevated to a highly respectable art form in the late Middle Ages, while its subject matter still kept closely in touch with everyday life.<sup>37</sup>

It is interesting to consider that an author's style is often determined by his choice of theme and not necessarily by his audience. While one cannot make the blanket statement that the medieval author's style is generally reflective of his public, it is important to note a certain parallel between the author's style and his preference for a certain social class of characters in his Marian stories.

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 232.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 216.

Auerbach , in his Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages, discusses at length Augustine's classification of Christian literature, based on the principle of Ciceronian style. The "low" style discussed by Cicero is appropriate for didactic and exegetic literature. It is of utmost importance that this style be unadorned and totally free of ornamentation.<sup>38</sup> Auerbach refers to the "lowly, didactic style" as one unified and inseparable term.<sup>39</sup> But Christian literature, while employing low style in order to instruct, by definition must always deal with sublime subject matter. Therefore, the style of writing is not determined by the subject matter but by the purpose of the literature,<sup>40</sup> which, in this case, must effectively reach and instruct its audience. The definition of sermo humilis for Auerbach is that of the style which implies direct contact between author and audience, establishing a Christian bond of brotherhood.<sup>41</sup> The salvation of each reader or listener hangs in the balance.<sup>42</sup> A sublime subject, such as Marian worship, can be written about in a "low" style since the primary purpose of the literature is to instruct. This type of simple unadorned style is applicable to Voragine and Berceo, but not to the complicated rhetoric of Gautier.

Auerbach's theory is easily applicable to some of the collections of Marian miracles. We can see a parallel between

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<sup>38</sup>Auerbach, "Sermo humilis" in Literary Language..., p. 33.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 35-39.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

the use of popular or low style and a preference for popular or lower class characters in tales by Voragine and Berceo. We have mentioned that Berceo's preference for lower class characters may be traced to the third part of the Disciplina Clericalis, in which poor, simple people predominate (in ten of the seventeen stories). These humble people are always victorious when the tale contains a conflict between them and the rich and powerful. Gautier's preference for characters, as we will see in detail, is based on the upper echelons of society. There are also more class variations in Gautier than in Berceo; Berceo's stories demonstrate a conflict between a rich man and a poor man, for example, while Gautier's miracles often contain finer gradations and distinctions, such as that conflict between the lower and higher nobility. These detailed and subtle distinctions can be found in the twelfth century work of Andreas Capellanus, De amore.

De amore, The Art of Courtly Love, is a series of dialogues and discourses directed toward a young man with the purpose of instructing him in affairs of the heart. The author says in his preface that he is responding to young Walter's request by giving him advice that will help him proceed with caution. Book One, "Introduction to the Treatise on Love," is divided into six very short chapters explaining the nature of love and followed by eight dialogues, the seventh of which includes letters to and from the Countess of Champagne, dated May, 1174. Book One ends with twelve short chapters giving further advice on the various aspects of love. Book Two, "How Love May Be

Retained," contains eight more chapters, similar in form and dealing with the subject matter of the subheading. Book Three, "The Rejection of Love," is decidedly misogynist in nature, and is written in the form of a continuous essay.

One can draw certain parallels between this book and Gautier's work, specifically in the differentiation of classes. Voragine, Berceo and Alfonso rarely make more detailed class distinctions than rich and poor, nobility or peasant, while Gautier deals with the subtler distinctions of all social classes. All of Capellanus' dialogues begin with these distinctions, such as: "If a man of the higher nobility should seek the love of a woman of the middle class, he may keep the same style of address that a man of the simple nobility uses when he talks with a woman of this class."<sup>43</sup>

Another strong similarity between De amore and the Miracles de Nostre Dame is the authors' attitudes toward the lower classes. Capellanus' scorn for peasants approximates Gautier's disdain toward vilains: "We say that it rarely happens that we find farmers serving in Love's court, but naturally, like a horse or a mule, they give themselves up to the work of Venus, as nature's urging teaches them to do. For a farmer hard labor and the uninterrupted solaces of plough and mattock are sufficient."<sup>44</sup>

We have established a second grouping of five thematic categories, containing themes based on a special topic or interest

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<sup>43</sup> Andreas Capellanus, The Art of Courtly Love, trans. John Jay Parry (New York: 1941), p. 84.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 149.



that appealed to the Marian authors. The first category in this grouping reflects the standard Church role of Mary: those miracles whose principal dramatic event is Mary's intercession for a sinner before Christ or God. While the role of Mediatrix is assigned to her by the Church, the various ways in which she utilizes her powers gives her a broader scope than does the theological interpretation. Such a story is found in Voragine's De assumptione sanctae Mariae virginis, one of the longer anecdotes presented in the Legenda Aurea. The story is of a much more serious nature than many of the others, and the moralizing aspects are definitely emphasized. There is a dispute between God and the devil over a man's soul, as the man, who is a sinner, is having drunken hallucinations. The man does not have too good a chance for salvation, as he has done very few good deeds in his life so far. God is the one who speaks throughout most of the narrative, explaining the difference between the death of the body and the death of the soul, giving the man's soul an eight day respite before judgment. It is especially interesting from a thematic point of view that Mary's intercession is due to God's suggestion. Mary's decision is usually made after she considers either the sinner's position or his possible previous devotion, two possibilities that are never mentioned in the story. In a very graphic description, we read of Mary literally tipping the scales in the man's favor, and, due to her intervention, he decides to change his life and be a better person.

Another story dealing with a humble person affected by

Mary's intercession before God and Christ is Berceo's El sacristán impúdico.<sup>45</sup> The miracle shows us some important details about the author's attitude towards Mary and her special affection for sinners. We are told that a simple monk was so dedicated to Mary that he knelt at her statue every day. Everything is going well until the devil appears:

El enemigo malo, de Belzebud vicario,  
Que siempre fué e eslo de los buenos contrario,  
Tanto pudo bullir el sutil avversario,  
Que corrompió al monge, fizo lo fornicario.<sup>46</sup>

From that time on, the monk is bewitched and begins sneaking out at night and getting back just before dawn. But early one morning, on his way back, the monk falls into the river near the monastery and drowns. The devils see their chance to get his soul, and in a delightful scene, Berceo describes them as playing ball with the monk's soul as the angels descend and begin to quarrel with them. At this point, Mary appears, telling the devils that this is not any of their business:

'Con esta alma, foles,--diz,--non avedes nada,  
Mientras fué en el cuerpo fué mi acomendada  
Agora prendrie tuerto por yr desanparada.'<sup>47</sup>

When one of the devils tries to defend his point of view, Mary reminds him that this is her affair, and only she can forgive the sacristan. This is the only mention of forgiveness in the story, very unlike Gautier's severe and lengthy moralizing concerning the formal aspects of repentance. Perhaps it is because of Gautier's emphasis on penitence, and not on the

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<sup>45</sup>c.f. Gautier, III, pp. 165-90; Alfonso, Cantiga XI.

<sup>46</sup>Berceo, p. 21, stanza 78.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 23, stanza 89.

need for Mary's intercession, that we find almost no miracles in Gautier's collection that fit into the category of stories that depend on such an intercession. There are some miracles in Gautier in which Christ or God speaks, but they are neither invoked by Mary nor she by them, and there is no dramatic interaction between the three sacred personages. In Berceo, one cannot help feeling that Mary shrugs off the man's sins so lightly not only because he has always been so devoted to her, but also because his actions are caused by the prodding of the devil. Mary matched with the devil becomes a fighting archangel.

At the end of El sacristán impúdico, the Virgin calls on her Son to arrive at the final decision; Christ not only orders that the monk's soul be returned to God, but brings the simple man back to life. In order to underline both the dramatic and didactic perspectives of the story, once the monk comes to life he declares that he has seen the error of his ways, and that he will not only never sin again, but will spend the rest of his life doing good deeds for Mary.

The second thematic category in this group in which we are interested is comprised of those Marian miracles in which the Virgin shares center stage with a saint, usually with the purpose of saving a sinner. (Saints rarely play an active part in a Marian miracle.) Although there are frequent passing references to saints in these stories, our primary interest is those miracles in which a saint plays an integral dramatic role. The Legenda Aurea is an excellent example of the rarity

of such stories. Only four days of the liturgical calendar are devoted to Mary, and she rarely appears in stories of other saints nor do they appear in her stories with great frequency. There is no single example of an anecdote within Mary's feast days in the Legenda Aurea that includes another saint.

Berceo's story, El monje y San Pedro<sup>48</sup> belongs in this category not only because St. Peter plays an active part, but also because he shares Mary's role as intercessor before Christ. In this miracle, a simple-minded monk has a child by a woman of ill repute. He dies suddenly, without confession, and the devils take his soul away. St. Peter feels sorry for the monk, as it is his monastery that the man belonged to, and begs Christ to forgive the man his sins. Christ rejects St. Peter's plea, who then turns to Mary, asking her to intercede with her Son. Mary and Jesus have a very down-to-earth talk, in contrast to their sacred positions:

'Madre--dijo Don Cristo--, yo saberlo querria;  
¿Qué negocio vos trae con esta compannia?'  
'Fijo--disso la madre--, a rogarvos venia  
Por alma de un monge de fulana mongia.'<sup>49</sup>

Mary finally convinces Him, and when St. Peter realizes that she has been successful, he takes the monk's soul away from the devils and gives it to two angels to bring it back to its body, and the monk is resuscitated. He promises to reform and pledges special devotion to God, the Virgin, and St. Peter.

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<sup>48</sup>c.f. Gautier, II, pp. 227-36; Alfonso, Cantiga XIV.

<sup>49</sup>Berceo, p. 45, stanza 170.

Gautier's story, De celui cui se tua par l'amonestement dou dvable, deals with a monk's projected pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela and the ensuing battle between the devil and St. Jacques. It is a good example of how Mary's intervention, along with the support of a saint, can save a man from the consequences of a mortal sin (i.e. suicide). The story is another example of a simple man tricked into sinning by the devil. A rich man, who has always been charitable, sets out on a pilgrimage in honor of St. Jacques. On the way, the devil appears to him disguised as the saint, and tells the man that the only way he can repent for the carnal sins that he has committed in his lifetime is to cut off his genitals and then kill himself. The man is terrified, but since he believes the presence is really St. Jacques, he does as he is ordered. As soon as he dies, the devils rush in to get his soul, and the real St. Jacques appears with St. Peter accompanying him, ready to do battle. The devil speaks, very proud of what he has done, and St. Jacques' answer involves the Virgin and the exoneration of the pilgrim:

'Tais! fait sain Jaques. En mon non  
 L'as tu giullié et deceü.  
 Tu n'as passiage ne tieu  
 En pelerin qui me requiere.  
 A cestui ci bons gaians liere;  
 N'ara mais hui garde de toi.  
 Quantu'il a fait a fait por moi.  
 Deceü l'as en ma semblance,  
 Mais rien n'i vaut ta decevance,  
 Et nequedant de cest affaire  
 Nule force ne t'en veil afire.  
 Ainz m'en apui au jugement  
 La mere au haut roi que ne ment.'<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Gautier, II, 241, vv. 98-110.

As Mary appears to hear the judgment, the devils disappear, leaving the man's soul. Soon his body comes back to life. He gives thanks to Mary and St. Jacques and pledges to serve God and the Virgin, but does not specifically pledge his service to St. Jacques, as the monk in Berceo's story does to San Pedro.

Our third category deals with those stories that specifically treat some part of a liturgical text, such as the Ave Maria or other expression of Marian devotion. Ahsmann says that the Ave Maria is not widely used until the twelfth century, but once it appears, it seems to become enormously popular.<sup>51</sup> This explains the number of Marian miracles of the thirteenth century based on this type of Marian prayer. Another reason for the flourishing of Marian miracles based on prayers is the direct parallel of such usage in French religious poetry. Gautier has a number of chansons that revolve around a liturgical text, such as the Ave Maria.<sup>52</sup> There are also a number of medieval "farced texts," or parodies on liturgical texts such as the Ave Maria, Pater noster, and Credo.<sup>53</sup>

An example of a story based on such a text is found in Voragine's De annuntiatione dominica. A simple monk is taken to task by his superior because all his prayers are composed of the only devotional words he knows: Ave Maria. The unfortunate monk dies shortly after, and the other brothers are amazed

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<sup>51</sup>Ahsmann, p. 17.

<sup>52</sup>Gautier, IV, 544-79.

<sup>53</sup>Eero Ilvonen, Parodies de thèmes pieux dans la poésie française du moyen âge (Helsinki: 1914).

when they pass by his grave. On the tombstone are inscribed the letters Ave Maria in gold. All the members of the order are sure that a miracle has occurred and "Intellexerunt ergo, quanta devotione illa duo verba dixerat, quem dominus tanati honore prodigii illustravit."<sup>54</sup>

Berceo's El clérigo ignorante deals with a similar idea, a simple priest who says his Mass to Mary every day, but can only say one devotion, and is thereby criticized for his ignorance:

Fo est missacantano al bispo acusado  
Que era idiota, mal clerigo provado;  
'Salve Sancta Parens' solo tenie usado,  
Non sabie otra missa el torpe embargado.<sup>55</sup>

The bishop gets very angry, threatening to throw the monk out of the monastery if he does not learn some other prayers. At this point Mary appears to the bishop in a vision, and really berates him in an unusual show of temper:

'Si tu no li mandares decir la missa mia  
Como sabie decirla, grand querella avria:  
E tu serás finado hasta el trenteno dia:  
¡Desend veras que vale la sanna de María!'<sup>56</sup>

The bishop is very frightened and sends for the monk, begging his pardon for the way in which he has criticized him, and asking him to return to saying the Mass as he always has. The bishop undergoes a change and devotes himself to Mary, and Berceo reminds us that one need not know how to write or even pray to be able to show devotion to the Virgin.

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<sup>54</sup>Voragine, p. 221.

<sup>55</sup>Berceo, p. 56, stanza 221.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 58, stanza 231.

Gautier's De la nonain a cui Nostre Dame abreja ses salus<sup>57</sup>

is based on a similar concept. A nun is so devoted to Mary that she spends all her time and energy praying to her. Suer Eulaile's devotion is rather extreme, however, as she says her prayers to Mary one hundred fifty times a day. One night, as she goes to bed, Mary appears to her, first commending her for her unfailing dedication, but then gently chastising her by reminding her that everything, even humble acts like eating and sleeping, has its own time and place. Mary asks that the nun reduce the numbers of prayers to fifty. She does so, and from then on leads a much happier life.

Another popular liturgical theme is the possible variations on the letters M-A-R-I-A as seen in Alfonso's Cantiga LVI, Esta é como Santa Maria fez nacer as cinco rosas na boca do monxe de pos sa morte, pelos cinco salmos que dizia a onrra das cinco léteras que a no seu nome. The story is very simple: an uneducated monk who is especially devoted to Mary decides, in spite of his ignorance, to dedicate five special prayers to her, one for each letter of her name. When the monk dies, Mary is so moved that she creates a miracle: from his mouth grows a rose bush with five flowers, one for each prayer he has written.

Our fourth category is concerned with sacred objects directly pertaining to Mary around which a miracle story is based. The objects fall into two categories: first, those

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<sup>57</sup>Gautier, II, 273-84.



that are part of Mary herself, such as her hair or the milk from her breast; and second (and more frequently), statues, images or relics of the Virgin. Upon reading these miracles one understands just how important they must have been to the medieval public: first, because there are so many such tales that fall into this thematic category. But, more importantly, the reader begins to understand that these images, for example, were not merely a symbol of Mary to her followers, as such devotional things might be interpreted through modern eyes. These objects were Mary; they did not represent her. Such a cult of sacred objects may have been influenced by the fourth Lateran Council of the church's making transubstantiation an official part of the dogma in 1215. In accordance with this official pronouncement, one would expect a mandate of official celebration. But, in keeping with the common people's influence on the celebration of the Church's feast days, the credit for the original establishment of the Corpus Christi festival is given to Blessed Juliana, prioress of Cornillon near Liège, France, who had a vision instructing her to speak to the bishop about this feast day. She did so, and the bishop made Corpus Christi an official festival for that diocese in 1246. But it was not until 1264 that Pope Urban IV made the feast of Corpus Christi universally official for the Church.<sup>58</sup> Such a doctrine had its effect on not only the religious literature concerning Christ of the time, but on the Marian miracles,

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<sup>58</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica (Chicago: 1966), vol. VI, p. 542.

in which an object pertaining directly to Mary is considered actually to be a part of her.

One story concerning a sacred object, a candle, is the only story in the Legenda Aurea that is thematically related to the feast day in which it is placed, De purificatione beatae Mariae virginis, the feast of Candlemas. A wealthy woman is so devoted to the Virgin that she has a chapel built adjoining her house and installs a permanent chaplain to say the Mass in honor of Mary every day. On the day of the feast of the Purification, the chaplain is called away on business and cannot say Mass as usual. When the woman realizes that she will miss Mass that day, she decides to give her mantle to a poor man as a charitable act in honor of the Virgin.

She enters her room, bows down before the special altar of Mary that she keeps there, and then goes to bed. As she falls asleep she has one of the most grandiose, detailed visions described in a Marian miracle:

Tunc subito in excessum mentis facta, videbatur sibi, se in quadam ecclesia pulcherrima et speciosa collicatam esse, et respiciens vidit turbam maximam virginum in ecclesiam venientem, quas quaeda, virgo pulcherrima dyadenate coronata praeibat... Tunc per choram respiciens vidit duos cerofarios, subdyaconum, dyaconum et sacerdotem sacris indutos vestibus ad altare procedentes, tamquam missarum sollemnia celerbrare volentes. Videbatur autem sibi, quod acoliti essent Vincentius et Laurentius, dyaconus et subdyaconus duo angeli, et sacerdos antem Christus...<sup>59</sup>

In the vision, as the procession passes, the woman does not want to offer her candle, as is customary, but Voragine

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<sup>59</sup>Voragine, pp. 165-66.

offers no explanation. Mary asks her for it three times and then sends a messenger to take it from her. A sort of heavenly tug-of-war ensues, the candle breaks, and the woman wakes up. Upon awakening, she finds the piece of broken candle still in her hand. She realizes then that the Virgin has given it to her as a holy object and that it must be used to heal the sick. The devout woman promises to use the candle for that special purpose.

Berceo also writes stories whose basic theme deals with a sacred object related to Mary. La imagen respetada is a much simpler story, based on a disastrous fire in a monastery. The monks of that monastery have always had a special devotion to Mary, and to her statue in its church:

Estava la imagen en su trono posada,  
So fiço en sus brazos, cosa es costumada,  
Los reis redor ella, sedie bien compañada,  
Como rica reina de Dios sanctificada.<sup>60</sup>

It is interesting to note here that of all the Marian miracles that we have read, this is the only one (with the exception of an anecdote by Voragine that we will deal with in Chapter Four<sup>61</sup>) in which Christ or his image appears in the form of a child. Although most twelfth and some thirteenth century statues of the Virgin are shown with her holding the infant Jesus, it is noteworthy that thirteenth century literary interpretations of Mary almost always depict her alone. If Christ appears in a Marian miracle he is a grown man, usually sitting in judgment of a sinner. Although statues of the Virgin and child may have

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<sup>60</sup>Berceo, p. 80, stanza 319.

<sup>61</sup>Voragine, De nativitate beatae Mariae virginis, pp. 591-92.

been, as Berceo says "cosa...costumnada" in the thirteenth century, such a representation in the literature of the same century is unusual.

After a further description of the elegant statue, Berceo describes how the fire ravages the church and how the monks barely manage to escape with their lives. Everything inside the church is destroyed, except for the revered statue of Mary and Jesus. Berceo knew the medieval public's unshakeable belief that this statue was not only representative of Mary but was actually part of her, and therefore no phenomenon, not even a fire, could possibly destroy it.

Gautier's story concerning a sacred object, De l'ymage Nostre Dame, is interesting because it shows the author's obvious intention of supporting the Church's policies toward conversion. While the miracle stories of all the authors tend to be moralizing in purpose, some of them, such as this one, have a strong value as propaganda as well. The moralizing stories, which are representative of the majority, merely present the reader with an example of good triumphing over evil, for the purpose of teaching the right way. Those few stories with a "propaganda" value specifically try to change the reader's mind and/or his religious position, or to convince him of the feasibility of a certain Church policy, usually that of conversion of the "pagans."

This Gautier story deals with a Saracen who had a beautiful picture of Mary. He is so moved by the Virgin's beauty that he decides to convert to Christianity, with no

further explanation:

Baptisiez fu, et sa maisnie,  
Toute après lui fu baptisie  
Par le myracle, qu' apert virent.  
Leur creance et leur loi guerpirent  
Maint sarrasin et maint païen.  
Ne priserent un pois baien  
Ne Mahomet ne Tervagan.<sup>62</sup>

The devils come to tempt the convert but, because of his devotion to Mary, his new-found faith in Christianity cannot be shaken. Gautier elaborates at length, as is often his custom, on the merits of the Church and on how wise it was of the Saracen to see the one true way.

Alfonso also has a story, Cantiga IX, based on a statue of Mary, but with a more complex plot and a more visually dramatic ending: Esta é como Santa Maria fez en Sardonav, preto de Domas, que a sa omagen, que era pintada en hua távoa, se fezese carne et manas' ovo. In the town of Sardonav there lived a very devout woman on the pilgrimage route. On his way to Syria, a monk passes through and the woman begs him to bring her back a statue of Mary from the Holy Land. But when the monk stops by the town on his way back he admits that he has forgotten her request. Then a voice from heaven chastises him:

... 'Mesqu'yo,  
¿e como non levas, / asse Deus te valla,  
a omagen tigo / e vas teu cam'yo?<sup>63</sup>

The monk makes another trip to fetch the statue, but is so impressed with its beauty that he decides to keep it for his

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<sup>62</sup>Gautier, III, 26, vv. 73-79.

<sup>63</sup>Alfonso, I, 29.

church. A storm impedes him on his way back to the monastery, and the wind carries his ship back to the town where the devout woman is waiting. He finally gives her the statue, which then begins to spout forth holy oil. The image of Mary is essential to the story, and the sacred substance that comes from it is further proof of the woman's devotion.

Our fifth and final category deals with the special Marian stories that center around Jews, or rather, the popular medieval negative propaganda that often accompanies Christian moralizing literature of this period.<sup>64</sup> The reader wonders why it was only the Jews and not also the Arab "infidels," who were discriminated against by all the Marian authors. Norman Cohn explains:

But if the Saracen...long retained in the popular imagination a certain demonic quality, the Jew was an even more horrifying figure. Jews and Saracens were generally regarded as closely akin, if not identical; but since the Jews lived scattered through Christian Europe, they came to occupy by far the larger part in popular demonology.<sup>65</sup>

There are many stories, some better suited to other thematic categories, in which an evil Jew is present, but there are only a few stories in which the Jews or their actions are essential to the plot. Although the Jew is often used as a stock figure in medieval literature, Mary's particular attitude towards Jews is of interest to us here. "In spite of her own

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<sup>64</sup>For a discussion of categories of French miracles involving Jews, see Manya Lifschitz-Golden, Les juifs dans la littérature française du moyen âge (New York: 1935), pp. 75ff.

<sup>65</sup>Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Messianism in Medieval and Reformation Europe and its Bearing on Modern Totalitarian Movements, 2nd ed. (New York: 1961), pp. 59-60.

origin she disliked Jews, and rarely neglected a chance to maltreat them."<sup>66</sup> This unfortunate statement is very applicable to the miracle stories. When Gautier's Mary becomes furious with a Jew, however, it does not seem so unusual to the reader, as we have seen her previous fits of temper in other French miracles in the collection. More important, she, unlike Berceo's Mary, gets almost as angry at other "infidels," specifically the Arabs, in stories such as the one describing her defense of Constantinople.<sup>67</sup> But Berceo's Mary, who is almost never angry, becomes actually furious and totally unyielding when dealing with the Jews. These confrontations are the only incidents in Berceo in which Mary seems out of character. While Voragine and Alfonso demonstrate a negative nonchalance in their treatment of the Jews, the overall formula for all four authors seems to be: if a sinner has been devout in his reverence to Mary, he will be saved; if he has shown no special devotion to Mary, he is a Jew. These attacks are often misinformed and hackneyed, but vicious all the same.<sup>68</sup>

An example of such an attitude to be found in Berceo, is his Los judíos de Toledo. As we have said, Mary acts seemingly out of character. It is her feast day in Toledo, and the archbishop is about to say Mass in her church, when a voice

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<sup>66</sup>Adams, p. 258.

<sup>67</sup>Gautier, IV, 31-41.

<sup>68</sup>A fourteenth century representation of Marian anti-semitism is found in "The Prioress's Tale" in Geoffrey Chaucer, Canterbury Tales, ed. Rev. Walter Skeat (New York: 1957), pp. 174-80.

is heard:

Fablólis voz del cielo dolient e querellosa:  
 'Oid,--dixo--cristianos, una estranna cosa:  
 La gent de iudaismo, sorda e cegaïosa,  
 Nunqua contra don Cristo non fo más porfiosa.'<sup>69</sup>

She continues, insisting that the Jews crucified her Son, and adding that they have never had any respect for her. The people realize that it is Mary's voice, and the archbishop speaks to the people, advising them that in order to please the Virgin, they must begin by routing the rabbis out of their houses, reminding them that they have Mary's guidance. In the house of the highest rabbi, the people find a wax figure of Christ distorted by nails and thorns stuck in all over it. The people are furious, they kill the rabbi and proceed to rid the city of all its Jews. The story is unique in that it is a symbolic indictment of all the Jews in one city, a practice to become widespread in Spain in centuries to come.

An example of a story dealing with an unfavorable look at a specific Jew is Gautier's De la tavlete en coi l'ymage de la mere Dieu estoit peinte. Gautier does not miss the opportunity to give us his opinion of Jews in general:

Par aventure ansi avint  
 C'un giüs en la maison vint  
 D'un crestïen dont ert acointes.  
 Malicïeus estoit et cointes,  
 Crestienté mout despisoit  
 Et mout volontiers mesdisoit  
 De la puissant dame celestre.<sup>70</sup>

In the Christian's house, there is a tablet with a lovely

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<sup>69</sup>Berceo, p. 101, stanza 416.

<sup>70</sup>Gautier, II, 101, vv. 9-15.



picture of Mary painted on it. When the Jew enters, he begins to comment on it, blaspheming and mocking the holy object. The ultimate disgrace is his throwing it in the privy. The townspeople come running as the Christian cries out; they retrieve the image, and after cleaning it, find it is even more beautiful than before. Gautier ends the story by warning the reader:

Ne doit pas estre as gius douce,  
Car trop la heent corelment  
Sel comparront mout cruelment.<sup>71</sup>

Related to our study of the categorization of themes is the utilization of formulae within an individual miracle story. After reading a number of these stories, a formulaic internal plan appears: it is evident that each tale is roughly organized within a tripartite structure: the sinner and his sin, the threat of damnation, and his salvation through Mary. The repetition of familiar phrases throughout these descriptions of actions, especially those descriptions directly pertaining to Mary, inherit their formulaic quality in part from the oral tradition<sup>72</sup> as we will discuss in Chapter Four. Besides the similarities in thematic categories among authors, there are certain formulaic presentations of similar topoi which seem to repeat themselves: the standard representation of the Jew, the repentant lay sinner going off to a monastery, or the rich and powerful losing to the poor and humble.

It is possible to show widely separated authors sharing

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 104, vv. 80-82.

<sup>72</sup>Auerbach, "Camilla," p. 202.

similar categories of Marian miracles, as originality is not a primary consideration within a medieval context, as most medieval authors share a well of common subject matter. It is the difference in each author's presentation of a similar theme that gives us significant information about an individual collection of Marian miracles. "Originality" within a medieval Marian context may well mean an unusual way of dealing with an already familiar subject by means of dramatic dialogue, detailed characterization or perhaps an unorthodox focus on a common social or moral situation. It is this individualized treatment of common subject matter that differentiates one collection of Marian miracles from another.

## CHAPTER THREE: SAME NARRATIVE, DIFFERENT AUTHORS

We have seen that the choice of a certain theme or a specific story does not define the author's point of view or his particular literary preferences. Yet certain specific considerations such as brevity or length of description, number of characters in the narrative, development of plot, presence or absence of dialogue, and most important, the appearance and description of the Virgin herself, when dealt with by different authors concentrating on the same story can prove useful in developing an approach to individual characteristics and attitudes in Voragine, Berceo, Gautier and Alfonso.

From a subjective point of view, certain stories are more appealing to the reader, whether for purposes of characterization, picturesque description, or the portrait of Mary. Yet the tendency to prefer some stories must have influenced these authors as well, as in most cases all four have presented us with versions of the same story, reflecting its popularity at the time. Such is the story of the little Jewish child who takes communion at Easter and is then thrown into the hot oven by his father.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>c.f. Achille Jubinal, ed. Nouveau Recueil de contes, dits, fabliaux et autres pièces inédites des XIIe, XVe et XVe siècles, 2 vols. (Paris: 1839), I, 231 ff. Sister Gripkey gives a complete listing of earlier Latin miracles, listed in her index as "Jew Boy, legend of." c.f. Hilding Kjellman, La deuxième collection anglo-normande des Miracles de la sainte Vierge et son original latin (Paris and Upsala: 1922), intro. p. xi and ff. for a discussion of Le dit au petit juittel in older versions. Kjellman believes that this story was introduced to the West by Gregory of Tours (intro., p. xxvii and ff.).

It is of interest that each author makes it clear at the very beginning of the story that the events take place in Bourges. This fact in itself makes the story unusual, as very few Marian miracles have specific geographical locations. Bourges is a likely choice for such a story, as there was a large Jewish community there at that time, and the town was also a mercantile center. A second consideration emphasized by all the authors is that the miracle takes place at Easter. Since the story revolves around the taking of communion, it is easy to understand why it is specifically set at Easter, as the fourth Lateran council declared shortly before the writing of these stories (in 1215) that confession and communion were obligatory at Easter.<sup>2</sup> There are, however, very few Marian miracles like this one that concern either communion or Easter.

The presentation of characters is an area in which the authors show marked differences. Voragine's presentation of his characters is oversimplified: only the boy and his father have any dramatic importance, and even they seem one-dimensional in their limited roles. Mary herself appears with no description or explanation, and the role of the mother is merely incidental. The boy, who is central to the development of the story, is a rather plastic figure: he goes to church to take communion because the Christian boys do, but we are not told why he has chosen to do so, nor are we told, until after the fact, that

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<sup>2</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica, VI, 638.

he is moved to tenderness by the image of Mary. The little boy returns home from church and when he tells his father that he has taken communion, the man becomes furious and throws him into a hot oven. Voragine's sketch of the father comes to life more than the other characters, as we are at least shown that he is angry.

The use of dialogue is often significant in determining the structure of the story, as dialogue is more prevalent in comic and love stories during the Middle Ages than it is in didactic pieces. In Voragine's story the only speaker is the boy, who, after being saved from the oven by Mary, explains that he was touched by seeing the statue of her in the Church. But his remarks have little dramatic effect as no one answers him, nor does the narrator comment specifically on the child's remarks, but just continues telling his story.

Berceo uses dialogue very effectively in his development of a dramatic character. Although only the child speaks in Berceo's as well as Alfonso's version of the story, he speaks at greater length in Berceo's version than in Alfonso's or Voragine's, explaining not only that he took communion, but how it was the same "duenna" he had seen holding her child at the altar that rescued him unscathed from the oven. Berceo gives a very vivid description of the father's reaction to the boy's admission of what he has done:

Avie dentro en casa esti can traidor  
Un forno grand e fiero que fazie grand pavor:  
Fizolo encender el loco peccador,  
De guisa que echava sovero grand calor.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Berceo, p. 90, stanza 362.

Berceo's portrait of the mother comes to life a little more than Voragine's, as she is seen screaming for help. It is interesting to note that only in Alfonso's version is the mother given a name, Rachel, while his overall portrayal of the story is generally lacking in both dialogue and characterization.

Gautier's development of character through dialogue is perhaps the most interesting because it is the most detailed. The child, the father and the mother all speak; their dialogue is supplemented by Gautier's descriptive narration linking their lines and supplying the reader with any additional information that seems necessary. An example of this is the father's comments after hearing what his son has done:

'Tu iez cheüs en maus liens!  
En despit de toz crestliens  
Et en viltance de lor loi  
Grans merveilles ferai de toi!<sup>4</sup>

After the child has been rescued, Gautier explains what has happened, but unlike Voragine's, his explanation is rather sophisticated and lengthy:

'Par foit, fait il, la bele ymage  
Qui hui matin me sousitoit  
Quant ele me commenoit  
Avec moi vint en la fornaise;  
Luez m'endormi, si fui aaise.  
Et si me sanble, bien sanz faille,  
Que me covri de la toaille  
Qu'ele a sor l'autel offulee.  
Puis ne senti fu ne fume, e,  
Ainz m'ai tant dormi sor la brese  
Qu'encor en sui je plus aaise.'<sup>5</sup>

Although Alfonso's version of the story has certain textual

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<sup>4</sup>Gautier, III, 97, vv. 51-54.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 98-99, vv. 94-104.

similarities to Gautier's, it is almost completely lacking in character motivation or lengthy description. The only truly original detail that Alfonso specifies is that it is Mary herself who gives the host to the child.

If we compare the presentation and characterization of Mary in the four versions of this miracle, we see each author's personal interpretation of her role. In each case it is the child's description, as created by the author, that determines our perception of Mary, of her actions, and of the significance of her presence. Although there is no embellishment in the description of Voragine, very little in Alfonso, some in Berceo and a great deal in Gautier, the actual characterization of the Virgin in the stories depends solely on the words spoken by the child.

The use of moralizing or sermonizing throughout a Marian miracle is often related to the purpose of the miracle as defined by its ending, as seen in Gautier's formulaic use of ending a story by emphasizing its moral. There are no sentences nor even words in the Voragine text that serve any other purpose than the continuance of the plot; the author includes no commentary, didactic or otherwise. We are told that the villagers throw the father into the oven as retribution at the end, but we are left to draw our own conclusions as to the moral. Berceo on the other hand punctuates his simple narrative with comments on the actions of his characters: "Mal venga a tal padre que tal faze a fijo."<sup>6</sup> He continues to give us his opinion

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<sup>6</sup>Berceo, p. 90, stanza 363.

through the voices of the townspeople:

Dizienli mal oficio, facienli mala ofrenda,  
Dizen por pater noster, 'qual fizo, atal prenda.'  
De la comunicanda domini Dios nos defienda,  
Por al diablo sea tan maleita renda.<sup>7</sup>

Gautier intersperses his account of the miracle with moralizing comments, allowing only half the story to be concerned with narration of action. Gautier adds an important detail, furthering the didactic purpose of the story, for after the miracle has happened

...le baptisse a mout grant joie.  
Sa mere après lui se baptoie  
Ou non se Sainte Trinité,  
Pluiseur giu par la cité.  
Por le myracle qu'apert virent  
A nostre loi se convirterent.  
Dieu servirent toute leur vie  
Et ma dame sainte Marie...<sup>8</sup>

Gautier explicitly tells us that the mother and child convert and dedicate their lives to serving Mary, while Alfonso, who uses very few moralizing asides in his narrative, tells us only that the two received baptism. Even this fact is absent from Berceo's and Voragine's texts. Not only is Gautier's tale the most sophisticated in language and description but it is also carefully constructed in order to lead the reader toward the dramatic conversion at the end.

Another story utilized by the four authors, sometimes known in English as The Clerk and the Ring,<sup>9</sup> is really a romantic triangle. Although the plot varies according to author, the basic story line consists of a young man who has pledged

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 92, stanza 373.

<sup>8</sup> Gautier, II, 99, vv. 111-18.

<sup>9</sup> c.f. Kjellman, intro., p. 1; c.f. Prosper Mérimée, "La Venus d'Ille" in Carmen et autres Nouvelles (New York: 1930).



himself to Mary, but who, after the death of his family, is persuaded by other relatives to marry. Mary's role is that of the betrayed woman, who appears to him on his wedding night and so upsets him that he leaves his bride to go to a monastery.

None of the four versions of the story dates it at any specific time of year, but both Alfonso and Berceo say that the events happen in Pisa. The number of characters in each story is three, as is required by the situation, but it is the use of dialogue that differentiates the effect of the characterization. Gautier's version is the only one in which the young man speaks; in the others only Mary speaks. How Mary appears and the effect of what she says when she speaks are important in constructing an overall picture of how each author sees her.

In Voragine's story, as with all his stories, a simple narrative line is followed, and Mary appears only after the young man has already married. Her statement is short and direct: "'o stulte et infidelis, cur me amicam et sponsam tuam relinquis et mihi feminam aliam anteponis?'"<sup>10</sup> In Berceo's story, as in Gautier's and Alfonso's, Mary's first appearance takes place before the wedding, after she realizes that the clerk is about to be married. She is very outspoken and sounds more like any jealous woman than the Virgin Mary:

'Don fol, malastrugado, torpe e enloquido,  
¿En qué roidos andas, en qué eres caído?  
Semeías ervolado que as iervas veído...

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<sup>10</sup>Voragine, p. 592.

Assaz eras varon bien casado conmigo:  
 Io mucho te queria como a buen amigo;  
 Mas tu andas buscando mejor pan de trigo:  
 Non valdrás mas por esso quanto vale un figo.<sup>11</sup>

In the first line her addressing the clerk as "don fol" is insulting enough, but then she adds "malastrugado, torpe e enloquido" for good measure. In the last line Mary decides that all he is worth is "quanto vale un figo," a popular expression for those who are fortune hunters, and go "buscando mejor pan de trigo." These expressions would be totally appropriate in a medieval tale in which a farmer's wife is berating her shame-faced husband. This very human portrayal of Mary is typical of Berceo. Even at her angriest, her rage is never convincing; we know that she is basically sweet and forgiving ("Io mucho te queria como a buen amigo") and will persuade, rather than command, the young man to change his mind.

Gautier's picture of Mary in the same situation is very different, in part because the story is more complex. A ring that the clerk places on the finger of the statue of Mary as a sign of betrothal plays an integral part in the promise he makes to her, and he clearly vows to serve only Mary for the rest of his life. When Mary appears, after realizing his betrayal, she speaks like an aristocratic woman scorned:

'Ce n'est mie, fait ele, drois  
 Ne loiautez que tu me fais,  
 Laidement t'iez vers moi mesfais,  
 Vois ci l'anel a ta meschine,  
 Que me donas par amor fine

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<sup>11</sup>Berceo, p. 85, stanzas 340-41.

Et se disoiez que cent tans  
 Ere plus bèle et plus plaisanz  
 Que pucele que tu seüsses.  
 Loial amie en moi eüsses  
 Se ne m'eussez deguerpie  
 La rose laisses por l'ortie  
 Et l'aiglentier por le seüz.  
 Chetiz! tu iez si deceüs  
 Que le fruit laissez por la fuelle,  
 La lamproie por la suetuelle;  
 Por le venim et por le fiel,  
 Laissez la ree et le doz miel.<sup>12</sup>

Gautier's choice of "courtly" language makes Mary seem like a wronged princess ("Que me donas...que tu seüsses."). She is very unlike Berceo's Mary, whose speech approximates that of a peasant.

Gautier continues his narrative by telling us that on his wedding night the young man sees the image of Mary rising between him and his bride. She is very different from Berceo's gently scolding Virgin; she truly berates him, but is more haughty than Berceo's Mary. Gautier describes her as "Orrible, fiere et desdaigneuse."<sup>13</sup> At this point, we can see the dramatic value of dialogue shared by two characters, for the young man is so shaken by Mary's anger that he answers her, but first asks the Holy Spirit for help. This is quite a reversal, as most sinners in Marian miracles turn to Mary because they have been refused elsewhere or find other help inaccessible.

Alfonso's Mary also warns the clerk before the wedding,

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<sup>12</sup>

Gautier, II, 201-202, vv. 116-32.

<sup>13</sup>

Ibid., p. 202, v. 146.

but he falls asleep in the church on the day of the marriage and she appears in a vision. Her mood seems more akin to Berceo's portrait than to Gautier's:

'Non es tu o que dizias  
que mi mais que al amavas  
e que me noytes e dias  
mui de grado saudavas?  
Porqué outra fillar yas  
amiga e desdennavas  
a mi, que amor ti avia?'<sup>14</sup>

Alfonso's Mary, while not as colorful nor as earthy in her language as Berceo's, is still farther removed from the haughty Mary that Gautier describes. The language and tone of Alfonso's Mary is an almost direct parallel to the mood and use of terms of the Portuguese lyric cantiga d'amigo, in which a young girl complains of the absence or disregard of her lover.<sup>15</sup> Especially characteristic of the cantiga d'amigo are the cause and effect verbs "desdennavas" and "saudavas." As in the other stories, Mary reappears on the young man's wedding night, and he leaves his bride to devote himself to her. The other three versions mention specifically that he goes off to a monastery, while Alfonso only speaks of the clerk's total devotion to Mary.

Another story utilized by both Berceo and Gautier is the tale of the pregnant abbess. It is particularly appealing because of both the plot development and the characterization of the abbess. The abbess, who is kind and charitable and very devoted to Mary, becomes pregnant. After a while her pregnancy begins to show and the other sisters begin to berate

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<sup>14</sup>

Alfonso, II, 90.

<sup>15</sup>

Francesco Piccolo, La letteratura portoghese (Firenze: 1970), pp. 30-31.

her and call for the bishop to investigate. The night before his visit she prays to Mary, desperate because she has no excuse. The abbess has a vision of the Virgin, accompanied by angels, who takes the child from her womb to be cared for in a monastery.

The next day when the bishop appears there is nothing to show him and everyone is confused. As soon as the bishop begins to scold the other nuns for gossiping, the abbess reveals the miracle to him, and brings him to the place where a hermit is caring for the child. The child grows up to enter the religious life, and replaces the bishop when the old man dies.

In no version of the story is any location or time of year specified. Alfonso's version is so short and so lacking in dialogue, characterization and detail that it is not comparable to those of Gautier and Berceo. The principal number of characters in the story is three, although in Gautier's text the other nuns do have speaking parts. It is noteworthy in this case to remark on the length of both stories, as Gautier's at four hundred and four lines is one of his shortest, and Berceo's at three hundred thirty-two lines is one of his longest. To Gautier, the story of the abbess seems to be nothing more than another among the many miracle tales in his collection. Berceo creates the character of the abbess specifically, and the whole narrative in general, with remarkable detail and extensive dialogue not found in his other stories. Carmelo Gariano feels that the abbess is

one of Berceo's best literary figures, in that her internal crisis provides Berceo with a vehicle from which to characterize her better.<sup>16</sup>

In Gautier's story, it is the sharp-tongued nuns who speak first:

'Drois est c'on l'arde,  
La truande, la pappelarde!  
Ains ne nos fist se honte non.'<sup>17</sup>

This speech lessens the dramatic effect of the abbess' first speech, as the effect of dialogue on the narrative is of utmost importance, and the reader is waiting to hear the abbess' statement of the position she finds herself in. The abbess' first lines of dialogue are not singularly effective, although they are emotional and sorrowful. She does not speak of her sins in a specific fashion, but only asks Mary to take pity on her. In Berceo's story, the first lines of dialogue are spoken by the abbess, as she addresses Mary in a speech that is unusually long for one of his stories. The abbess expresses her sorrow, even going so far as admitting that she wants to die:

'Si non prendes, Sennora, de mi algun conseio,  
Veo mal aguisada de calir a conseio:  
Aqui quiero morir, en esti logareio,  
Ca sy alla salliero, firme an mal trebero.'<sup>18</sup>

Mary's answer to the abbess in Gautier's story is more dramatic than the abbess' invocation of her. She tells the

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<sup>16</sup>

Carmelo Gariano, Análisis estilístico de los Milagros de Nuestra Señora de Berceo (Madrid: 1971), p. 70.

<sup>17</sup>

Gautier, II, 182, vv. 41-43.

<sup>18</sup>

Berceo, p. 125, stanza 525.

abbess of her plan, and prepares to carry it out, seeming much more human and feeling than the abbess herself:

'Bele amie, fait Nostre Dame,  
Dou grant hontage et de l'infame  
Dont tante larme en as plouree  
A grant honeur t'ai delivree.'<sup>19</sup>

The grateful abbess answers her immediately, but again her words are vague; she is tearful and repentant, but she does not provide us with any specific details about either her innermost feelings or her relationship to Mary.

In Berceo's story, Mary also answers the abbess' prayers with the same plan of action, but it seems that there is already a warmth, a special friendship between the two:

Dissoli la Gloriosa: 'Aforzad, abbadesa,  
Bien estades comigo, non vos pongades quessa,  
Sepades que vos traio mui buenna promessa,  
Meior que non querrie la vuestra prioressa.'<sup>20</sup>

Berceo describes how the abbess discovers that she is not pregnant anymore. His description is so vivid, in part, because of his constant emphasis on the physical aspects of reality:

Palpóse con sus manos quando fo recordada,  
Por ventre, por costados, e por cada ijada:  
Trobo so vientre llacio, la cinta mui delgada,  
Como muger que es de tal cosa liberada.<sup>21</sup>

The ensuing dialogues between the abbess and the bishop are treated in much the same manner by Gautier and Berceo. This is one of the few real exchanges of dialogue in any

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<sup>19</sup>

Gautier, II, 187, vv. 153-56.

<sup>20</sup>

Berceo, p. 126, stanza 531.

<sup>21</sup>

Ibid., p. 127, stanza 537.

of the Marian stories. In most cases, a character speaks, often at length, but no one responds, or someone only answers much later, after a lot of interpolated commentary. In both Berceo's and Gautier's portrayal of this scene, the bishop and abbess speak to each other in what amounts to a running conversation, with Berceo's interpretation leaning towards shorter and more frequent exchanges.

Gautier's portrayal of the bishop is rather distant: we know that he is pleased with the abbess when she tells him of the miracle and of the child at the hermitage

Quant l'evesque sent ces noveles,  
Mout li furent plaisanz et beles.<sup>22</sup>

but we are not told anything more of his reaction nor of the abbess' to him. Berceo's bishop not only scolds the gossiping nuns, but is very moved after both the abbess and the hermit (who does not speak in the French text) explain the events.

The bishop replies:

'Duenna, si esto puede seer provado,  
Veré don Jesu Cristo que es vuestro pagado:  
Io mientre fuero vivo, faré vuestro mandado...'23

'Duenna,--disso--mercet, ca mucho so errado:  
Ruegovos que me sea el ierro perdonado.'24

and the abbess answers him:

'Sennor--disso la duenna--por Dios e la Gloriosa!  
Catat vuestra misura, non fagades tal cosa:  
Vos sodes omne sancto, io peccadriz doliosa,  
Si en al non tornades, seré de vos sannosa.'25

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<sup>22</sup>

Gautier, II, 194-95, vv. 363-64.

<sup>23</sup>

Berceo, p. 133, stanza 567.

<sup>24</sup>

Ibid., p. 134, stanza 571.

<sup>25</sup>

Ibid., stanza 572.



The abbess' insight into the disparity between her ecclesiastical and moral position and that of the bishop is extraordinary, especially since, at the beginning, she is the sinner and he the legitimate representative of the Church. Such social and psychological awareness is rare in a Marian miracle, as is such a blend of religious and picturesque elements. But the most extraordinary element of all is that, in Berceo's story, which is in fact a miracle of the Virgin, the abbess steals the scene, and actually, the whole show as well. This is the only case in all the Marian miracles I have encountered by any author in which the central personage by dint of dramatic importance as well as characterization is admittedly not Mary. The abbess is not only of central importance as a character in a Marian miracle, but lingers on in our imagination as one of the most successful dramatic characters in any medieval short narrative.

Other types of Marian stories are memorable for their message, as it were, and not for any popular or picturesque characteristics. Such a story is the miracle of Theophilus. Although tales of repentance are most common in French miracle collections, the story of Theophilus is one story commonly dealt with by Berceo, Voragine and Alfonso as well. Theophilus is a Church administrator in Asia Minor in the sixth century. He is selected to succeed the bishop who has just died, but refuses the position. The man who accepts the bishopric takes away Theophilus' job and leaves him in poverty. At this point he makes a Faustian pact with the devil (in the form of a Jew)

to regain his wealth and position, for which he must renounce God, and his special favorite, the Virgin. Once he realizes the gravity of what he has done, he begs for Mary's help; she retrieves the signed pact from Hell, and totally restores him to his former state in her eyes and in the eyes of the Church.

There are probably more versions of the Theophilus story than of any other Marian miracle,<sup>26</sup> including the narratives of Voragine, Gautier, Berceo and Alfonso. Although the story is treated differently by each author, there is no doubt that in each version of this miracle Mary emerges victorious. As one critic says, the "...emphasis is on the power of the Virgin, not the weakness of Theophilus."<sup>27</sup> It is necessary to understand

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e.g. Rutebeuf, Le Miracle de Théophile, Miracle du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, ed. Grace Frank (Paris: 1925). For critical commentaries on versions of the Theophilus legend see Kjellman, intro., p.xxvii note; George Webbe Dasent, ed., "Theophilus" in Icelandic, Low German and Other Foreign Tongues from MSS in the Royal Library, Stockholm (London: 1845); August Scheler, ed., "Li Priere Theophilus," Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, I (1877), 247-58; Alfred Weber, ed., "Zwei ungedruckte Versionen der Theophilussage," Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, I (1877), 521-40. This is only a partial listing. Sister Gripkey elaborates at length on some specific sources for the Theophilus story, pp. 10-70.

It is also significant that Theophilus is the only dramatic character in a Marian miracle who is portrayed in a scene in a cathedral. This stained-glass tableau exists in Notre Dame of Paris, in the lateral north portal. See Emile Mâle, L'art religieux de la fin du moyen âge, 3rd ed. (Paris: 1913), pp. 201-02.

27

W. T. H. Jackson, The Literature of the Middle Ages (New York: 1960), p. 313.

the medieval attitude which supported the popularity of this story: "We might say that the average medieval moralist does not have a strongly internalized sense of good and evil. Man often appears, as in the Miracle de Théophile, as a helpless victim of the vices, sins, and the Devil, or as a wretch who is saved by the miraculous intervention of the virtues, the Virgin or God."<sup>28</sup>

The simplest text we have considered dealing with the miracle of Theophilus is Voragine's,<sup>29</sup> the only one that specifies a place, Sicily, and a year, 537 A.D. Voragine's text adds little to the plot summary we have already given, as it has just twenty-nine lines of narrative (in which Theophilus never speaks) as compared to the longer combinations of narrative and dialogue of Alfonso (fifty-one lines), Berceo (six hundred sixty-one lines), and Gautier (2092 lines).

Each author's description of Theophilus' emotional condition after his fall from power is a good starting point from which to trace his decision to make the pact with the Jew. Gautier has him say:

'Hahi! maufés, car aquer ore  
Et se me di en quel maniere  
A m'oneur revenrai arriere  
Ahi! maufez, car acorez!<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>

Regalado, p. 33.

<sup>29</sup>

Voragine names his source for his Theophilus story, an unusual practice. He cites Fulbert of Chartres, d. 1028 in Legenda Aurea, p.cxxxi.

<sup>30</sup>

Gautier, I, 59, vv. 148-151.

Berceo describes the change in Theophilus, after he rejects the bishop's offer, in more dramatic terms:

Corrien los pleitos todos el vicario novel,  
Servienlo a Teofilo, mas plus servien a él;  
Cogió zelo Teofilo, cenzello el donzel  
Cambióse en Cain el que fuera Avel.<sup>31</sup>

Alfonso's short version of the story begins in media res, and we are given no details nor any insights into Theophilus' actions.

Alfonso does not describe the Jew at all, while Berceo paints him as the archetypal villain:

Era el trufán falsso, lleno de malos vicios,  
Savie encantamientos e otros artificios,  
Fazie el malo cercos e otros artificios,  
Belzebud lo guiava en todos sus oficios.<sup>32</sup>

Gautier's description of the Jew is similar to Berceo's, but as he often does, Gautier uses the opportunity to sermonize against all Jews:

...Cilz gius ert si decevables  
Et tant savoit barat et guille  
Que des plus sages de la vile  
avoit tornés a sa creance.<sup>33</sup>

Berceo's Jew makes it quite clear that Theophilus must specifically deny Christ and Mary, as does Gautier, who adds that Theophilus must give up his previous signs of good behavior as well:

Ja ne querra mais en sa vie  
En Dieu n'en sa mere Marie,  
Mostier n'eglise n'amera  
Ne bien n'aumosne ne fera.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>

Berceo, p. 165, stanza 718.

<sup>32</sup>

Ibid., pp. 165-66, stanza 722.

<sup>33</sup>

Gautier, I, 60-61, vv. 166-69.

<sup>34</sup>

Ibid., p. 76, vv. 419-22.

Alfonso had very little to say about the Jew's role:

...per consello sun judeu  
carta por gâar poder  
como demo, e lla deu;  
e fez-ll' en Deus descreer,  
des i a ela negar.<sup>35</sup>

Gautier is the most explicit in giving us the cause of Theophilus' downfall:

Theophilus aime mielz aise,  
Richece, honeur et signorie  
Que ma dame sainte Marie,  
Que tant soloit devant amer.<sup>36</sup>

It is insights such as this that make Gautier's story seem more unified, with a definite narrative flow, as compared to Berceo's gentle but simplified version and Alfonso's staccato assemblage of events lacking in connective material.

The first time in each version that Theophilus shows signs of repentance is textually important, as it reflects each author's attitude towards the importance of penitence as a religious issue as well as its importance to the development of the plot. In Alfonso's abridged narrative, there is no gradual change in Theophilus, only his final repentance. Berceo, however, allows Theophilus' change of heart to emerge more gradually throughout the narrative. Theophilus begins to question what he has done before he actually realizes his situation:

Disso entre si mismo: 'Mesquino, mal fadado;  
Del otero que sóvi, ¿quí me a derribado?

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<sup>35</sup>

Alfonso, I, 9.

<sup>36</sup>

Gautier, I, 83-84, vv. 548-551.

La alma e perdida, el cuerpo despreciado,  
El bien que e perdido no lo vere cobrado...'37

Gautier proceeds in a similar manner, with even more descriptive clues to Theophilus' later total repentance:

Theophilus, quant se propense  
Del grant forfait et de l'offense  
Qu'a faite Dieu et a sa mere,  
De mainte larme chaude et clere  
Esleve et asrrouse sa face.  
Mout a grant duel, mout a grant ire,  
Sovent pleure, souvent souspire.  
Maint souspir jete et mainte larme,  
Ne garde l'eure ne le terme  
Que vif dyable estranglé l'aient  
Ou qu'en enfer tot vif l'en traient.<sup>38</sup>

Both Berceo's and Gautier's introduction to Theophilus' later repentance serves as an effective dramatic link to their final capitulation. As we have mentioned, the element of repentance is more important to Gautier than to Berceo.

J. C. Payen writes of the motif of repentance in medieval literature, saying that the act of repentance is essential to all Marian literature: "Mais très rares sont les textes où la seule intercession de Marie ouvre au pécheur les portes du ciel sans qu'elle s'accompagne d'un repentir profond et sincere de celui ou de celle por qui la Vierge intervient."<sup>39</sup>

The element of formal confession and repentance is also essential to the sermons of Jacques de Vitry.<sup>40</sup> But neither Berceo, Voragine, nor Alfonso ever emphasize the need for

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<sup>37</sup>

Berceo, p. 171, stanza 751.

<sup>38</sup>

Gautier, I, 93, vv. 703-14.

<sup>39</sup>

Jean-Charles Payen, Le motif du repentir dans la littérature française médiévale (des origines à 1230) (Geneva and Paris: 1968), p. 517.

<sup>40</sup>

Ibid., p. 547.

repentance. The titles of the stories are revealing: Berceo's is El Milagro de Teófilo, Alfonso's Esta é como Santa María fez cobrar a Teophilo a carta que fezera cono demo..., but only Gautier's is Comment Theophilus vint a penitance. Instead of emphasizing repentance, Berceo emphasizes Mary's unfailing goodness, as it is Mary's power that is more significant to Berceo than Theophilus' remorse.

The turning point in all versions of this story is Theophilus' prayer to the Virgin, as this speech is both dramatically and didactically the heart of the miracle. Berceo's character is explicit concerning his position when he speaks to Mary:

'Io no lo osaria al tu Fijo rogar,  
Por mi ventura mala busqueli grand pesar,  
Pero fio en elli como devo fiar,  
E quiero mi creencia a ti demostrar.'<sup>41</sup>

'Tu eres pora todo, grado al Criador  
Por rogar al tu Fijo, tu Padre, tu Sennor;  
Quequier que tu mandes e ovieres sabor,  
Todo lo farà él de mui buen amor.'<sup>42</sup>

An essential part of the understanding of the position of the sinner in a Marian miracle is the character's basic reluctance to appeal to God or Christ. This fear is an essential affirmation of Mary's position not only as an intercessor, but as the last hope for those in danger of mortal sin. Although Berceo's character is obviously fearful of God and Christ, he never seems frightened of Mary, even at his most repentant:

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<sup>41</sup>

Berceo, p. 178, stanza 791.

<sup>42</sup>

Ibid., pp. 179-80, stanza 798.

'Torna contra mi, Madre, la tu cara preciosa,  
 Faceſlo con derecho si me eres sannosa:  
 Non vaia más, a mal que es ida la cosa:  
 Torna sobre Teófilo, Reina Gloriosa.'<sup>43</sup>

Such an affectionate portrait of Mary is an accurate preparation for her first appearance. She is more scolding than angry, more sorrowful than righteous:

Dissol Sancta Maria, bien confuerto privado:  
 'Finca en paz. Teofilo, veate bien lazado:  
 Iré io, si pudiero recabdar el mandado:  
 Dios lo mande que sea ayna recabdado.'<sup>44</sup>

Alfonso's Teófilo addresses Mary in a brief, predictable manner:

'Os peccados meus  
 son tan muitos, sen mentir,  
 que se non per rogos teus,  
 non poss' eu perdon gaar'<sup>45</sup>

Gautier's prayer of Theophilus to Mary is the longest and most sorrowful of all. His tone is one of desperation:

'Las qu'ai je dit? Or fu c'enfance,  
 Car assez puet Diex de lassus  
 Plus pardonner que pechier nus.  
 En desespoir ja ne cherrai,  
 Mais viendrait quanqu' en terre ai,  
 Sanz retenir riens qui soit nee,  
 Guerpi sanz nule demoree...'<sup>46</sup>

Theophilus speaks as if he were expecting the harshest of punishments, and Mary's first appearance seems to confirm that fear:

Tot maintenant qu'il l'a veue,  
 La vision de Nostre Dame,  
 Avis li est que feu at flame

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<sup>43</sup>

Ibid., p. 175, stanza 775.

<sup>44</sup>

Ibid., p. 181, stanza 805.

<sup>45</sup>

Alfonso, I, 10.

<sup>46</sup>

Gautier, I, 104, vv. 878-84.



Doie saillir de son cler vis,  
Et si le despit et desdaingne  
Ainz dit mout desdaingneusment...<sup>47</sup>

'Di va! faite, ele, renoiez!  
Comment iés ti si faunoiez  
Que tu le haut signor apeles  
Que j'alaitai de mes mameles  
Ne moi ne lui porcoi reclaimmes  
Quant tu ne l'un ne l'autre aimmes?'<sup>48</sup>

Gautier's character addresses Mary again at length, and she finally decides to pardon him because of his previous devotion. She assures him that she will convince Christ to forgive him as well, and reappears on the third night. She brings the letter that sealed his pact with the Jew back from Hell, and restores Theophilus to Church and community, but with one important difference:

'Dame, en tes mains et en ta guide  
Commant, fait il, mon esperite.'  
Si tost com la parole eut dite,  
La bouche ovri et rende l'ame  
Devant l'ymage Nostre Dame.  
Si compaignon, quant mort le virent,  
Assez plorerent et genirent.  
De toutes par li people vint.<sup>49</sup>

It is only in Gautier's and Voragine's versions that Theophilus dies.<sup>50</sup> Gautier addresses the reader, advising him to follow the path of goodness and devotion to Mary, and warning us to beware of the pride that was Theophilus' downfall in a long annominatio on the word orgiuelz.

In Berceo's story the course of events is basically the same, but Theophilus asks the Virgin for help only once and

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<sup>47</sup>

Ibid., p. 101, vv. 732-39.

<sup>48</sup>

Ibid., pp. 107-08, vv. 943-48.

<sup>49</sup>

Ibid., p. 157, vv. 1772-1779.

<sup>50</sup>

Voragine, p. 47.

we are assured that she is ready and willing to help him immediately. There is no formal element of repentance, nor is there any severity in Mary's judgment or in her handling of the sinner. The letter is retrieved and Theophilus is restored to his former position: "Fue el pueblo certero que era ome santo."<sup>51</sup> He does not die, but goes on to live a full and happy life, as Berceo reminds us to give thanks to God and Mary.

Upon considering the same story as viewed by different authors we have been able to note certain important differences and similarities and draw some conclusions. First, we see that the author's use of dialogue is integral to the development of the story. Second, the characterization of Mary herself depends a great deal on the author's moral attitude and how far he wishes to extend the didactic purpose of the story. Third, the element of suspense or dramatic expectation depends wholly on how closely the reader can relate to the main character in the miracle. We see such a situation in the different versions of Theophilus. Not only is the sinner at his most desperate when he turns to Mary, but both he and the reader know that Mary's infallible help is at hand. Clearly, Theophilus' appeal to Mary is the most dramatic point in the narrative, yet the excitement is somewhat diminished by the reader's knowledge that no matter how bleak the prospects are for a happy ending, Mary will always come to the rescue. In the story of Theophilus, it is the character's situation and

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Berceo, p. 189, stanza 851.

not the character himself that sustains the dramatic impetus. Fourth, some characters as portrayed by one author are not particularly memorable, but when described by another become special, as in Berceo's La abadesa encinta. Not only is she the liveliest, most believable character we have encountered in the Marian miracles, but she is also reflective of the type of public who must have thoroughly enjoyed her. Even Gautier, whose characterization of the abbess is less affectionate, and therefore less successful in popular terms, never once blames or berates her for her sins. This is an extraordinary omission for the moralizing Gautier. The very humanity of the abbess, not only in her susceptibility to sin, like all mortals, but also in her humility of action and speech, makes her a warm, unusual example of a member of the clergy with whom the audience would want to identify. Fifth, the author's own commentary in these miracles is vital not only to the development of the plot, but also to the overall ambience in which the story is presented.

Sixth, and most important, we must consider why the four themes we have chosen have been selected by all four of the Marian authors. The themes share a dramatic, picturesque and popular appeal and represent the most successful stories in each author's collection. But each theme has individual characteristics. The story of the little Jewish boy does not necessarily have to be a Marian miracle. Any female saint, paralleling the boy's loving mother, could take the Virgin's place if not for the popularity of the cult. The romantic

triangle of The Clerk and the Ring is clearly a profane folk tale applied to Marian literature. The story of the pregnant abbess does not really depend on Mary to sustain its dramatic action, but it is most appropriate that a woman, and a mother as well, be the one to save the abbess. The story of Theophilus is the only story of the four that could not exist without Mary. All the numerous versions of this story emphasize Mary's role, and each text centers around Theophilus' prayer to the Virgin. So, while each author's treatment of a common theme gives us certain clues to his order of artistic priorities, we still cannot form a definitive opinion of his personality or his preferences. Such an ambiguous portrait of the Marian author is a direct parallel to the position of the medieval author in a broader perspective. To understand each individual Marian author in relation to his work, we must first establish the limitations and priorities of the medieval author in relation to his literary production and to his audience.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE AUTHOR AND HIS WORK

It is our purpose in this chapter to establish a perspective through which we can see the author in his work. We will develop the position of each author and his stylistic details separately, after first considering the position of the medieval author in his work and the importance of the author's use of the first person narrator in a medieval context. We will then deal with each author, considering the importance of his prologue, his use of Marian symbolism, the roles and attributes he gives to Mary, his presence in his work, as well as the significance of any moralizing material and the transitional devices he uses to incorporate such material into the body of the narrative. We will then consider a representative passage from each author for the purpose of grammatical analysis, further stylistic considerations and the importance of the characterization of Mary.

In order to discuss the individual style and the specific characteristics of each author, it is necessary to define the position of the medieval poet. Curtius says that there is no evidence of the suppression of the author's name in his works during the later Middle Ages, and furthermore, he notes an "unadulterated pride of authorship" in twelfth century France. Curtius even cites a case in which the suppression of the name is censured by a monk, the Cluniac Peter of Poitiers, in 1140.<sup>1</sup> He also reminds us that the poet's role was not as

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<sup>1</sup>Curtius, European Literature..., pp. 515-17.

yet defined in the Latin Middle Ages; his was a complementary function of school, church and society. The poet as literary figure was not as yet a recognizable phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> The presence of the author and the use of the first person in his writings must also be considered within a medieval context. The author's personal presence was not considered as important as the projection of his experience into a "spiritually profitable" end result: his literary production.<sup>3</sup> The individual poet, like the individual citizen, was only understood as a separate entity in a symbolic fashion when he was a representation of an allegorical figure or an eternal truth. In this way he had to be a sort of specialized Everyman, keeping his own identity clear as he projected it through his works.

When the medieval poet appears in his writings, especially in didactic literature, he is usually there to moralize or give an opinion of what is happening within the story. His presence fails to reveal anything personal about himself. He may tell his name and where he comes from, but what he is really like must be derived from the point of view that he establishes in his work: "...the relation between the poet and what he says of himself in his works is not direct; the poet gives neither an objective self-portrait nor an immediately subjective account of his inner feelings."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid., p. 469.

<sup>3</sup>  
Regalado, p. 256.

<sup>4</sup>  
Ibid., pp. 259-60.

Leo Spitzer amplifies this view by seeing the medieval poet as an "I" who surpassed the boundaries of individuality "and as a single consciousness who fixed in words his experience of universal truths."<sup>5</sup> It is significant that the author's "...choice of poetic personality...is determined by the poetic genre and themes."<sup>6</sup> It is for this reason that all the writers of these miracles must assume a serious, if not at times somber role: that of the cleric sermonizing for the benefit of the people while wrapping his moral in a pleasant story to further ease the didactic weight of the work. In the case of the collections of Marian miracles, the prologue often provides a good clue to the extent to which the author presents both his poetic personality and point of view.

When we consider Jacobus de Voragine as an individual author and storyteller, we notice that he is the only author under consideration who is not a poet. Not only are all of his works in prose, but he also differs from the others in his choice of Latin instead of the newly flourishing romance languages. If we try to establish a reason for Voragine's choice of prose, we must look at the overall literary production of Italy in the thirteenth century. This is not a period of great literary creativity;<sup>7</sup> the use of narrative in didactic literature is scarce and unimpressive. Such an atmosphere was

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 260. c.f. Leo Spitzer, "Note on the Poetic and the Empirical 'I' in Medieval Authors" in Traditio, 4(1946), 415-22.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 263.

<sup>7</sup>Francesco De Sanctis, The History of Italian Literature, 2 vols., trans. John Redfern (New York: 1959), I, 90.

not a great stimulus for originality or inventiveness. We can assume that Voragine chose to write in Latin as it was the easiest way of relating his stories. We can also assume that he chose prose in general, and his formal, simple style in particular as the least complicated vehicles for his writing of the Legenda Aurea.<sup>8</sup> Voragine's book is a collection of saints' lives in accordance with the feast days of the Church calendar, and his devotion to Mary is incidental. Voragine's contemporary, Jacopone da Todi, provides an excellent contrast to this lack of specific Marian devotion, and also represents a strong contrast in style and content to Voragine's work.

Jacopone's devotion to Mary is highly personal, deeply religious and without reservation. His form is an appropriate vehicle for his elegant, yet simple expressions of his love for Mary<sup>9</sup> and his poetry is a contrast to Voragine's prose both in content and in feeling:

'Di', Maria dolce, con quanto  
                   disio  
 miravi 'l tuo figliuol Cristo mio  
                   Dio.  
       Quando tu il partoristi senza  
                   pena,  
 la prima cosa, credo, che facesti,  
 si l'adorasti, o di grazia piena,  
 poi sopra il fien nel presepio il  
                   ponesti;  
 con pochi e pover' panni l'in-  
                   volgesti,  
 maravigliando o godendo, cred' io.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This information comes directly from a conversation I had with Professor Paolo Valesio, Department of Italian, N.Y.U.

<sup>9</sup> De Sanctis, I, 37.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 36.



Such an emotional expression of religious devotion can be found in canticles and hymns in the Italian vernacular as well as in the miracle and passion plays,<sup>11</sup> which we will discuss in detail in Chapter Five.

Voragine, in contrast, never at any time in his lengthy work uses the first person singular, clearly separating himself from the lyric and narrative traditions which the other authors seem to follow. In Voragine's prologue, in which he establishes the structure of the book, we find very little personal commentary about the author. He tells us only that the text is written by Brother Jacobus of Genoa, of the Order of Preachers. He tells us that the subject matter of the prologue is the divisions of the year, according to the Church calendar. There are four such allegorical seasons: erring from the right path, returning to the right path, reconciliation, and the period of pilgrimage. He then supplies the reader with Biblical references supporting these divisions, likening them to the seasons found in Nature. Voragine finally explains that he will adhere to the Church's view of the changing liturgical seasons and will therefore begin his book with Advent.

The prologue is a clear statement of purpose, and in many ways, perfectly structured in terms of the material that follows it. In much the same way that the structure of the Legenda Aurea rigidly adheres to the pattern of the Church calendar, so does the author's absence in his prologue, both

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Ibid., p. 39.

as first person narrator and as commentator, begin to establish a pattern of almost exclusively third person commentary that is strictly maintained throughout all the short narratives.

The manner in which each author develops his prologue shows us that there is a definite relationship between the amount of description a Marian author uses and the frequency and variation of symbolism he employs. When the author uses highly descriptive language, as in the poetry of Marian adoration that we will discuss later in this chapter, he makes frequent symbolic references to Mary. He also describes her roles and attributes by assigning each characteristic to a separate, appropriate symbol. A standard definition of medieval symbolism shows us the most popular literary images for Mary: "Medieval symbolism sought to induce mood, to stir emotion, not by individualizing concrete details, but by familiar typical associations: lamb, vine, star of the sea. Such symbols, long ago drawn from Messianic prophecy, had become<sup>12</sup> both numerous and familiar."

If a Marian author wants to emphasize Mary's power in saving a sinner, he will call her queen or empress; if he wants to emphasize her intercession before her Son, she will be Mother of God; if he sees her as Man's link to Nature, she will be lily, fleur de lis, la pradera siempre verde.

Voragine uses almost no description in any of his stories, be it either simple adjectivization or formal embellishment. In a like manner, he employs neither Biblical nor literary

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<sup>12</sup> Charles Sears Baldwin, Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic (to 1400) Interpreted from Representative Works (Massachusetts: 1959), p. 203.

symbolism to represent or address Mary. The only references he makes to her are simple variations on a theme: beata virgo, Maria virgine, sancta mater domini, mater Dei, Maria pulcherrima, Regina and so on. I have not found one instance in the Legenda Aurea in which Mary is referred to in symbolic form, as she is in the prologues of Berceo and Gautier. Voragine never refers to Mary by any of the standard medieval symbolic names mentioned. She is often Mary, Mother of God, but never Mary, Star of the Sea.

To draw yet another parallel, there is a specific relationship between the use or non-use of Marian symbolism in her miracles and the number of different dramatic poses or roles that Mary takes within that collection. Voragine, who uses no Marian symbolism, represents Mary in always the same manner, playing the same role. She is always the same sweet, if rather remote and colorless figure. She is not the jealous woman, the humble friend, the fighting archangel seen in the other Marian stories. Mary does not have the dramatic flexibility nor the variation of mood and situation seen in Berceo and Gautier.

Not only does Berceo's dramatic flexibility in his representation of Mary underline the difference between him and Voragine, but Berceo's approach to his writing of the Milagros in general is quite different. There is no doubt that Berceo's prologue has a dual purpose: first, it serves the medieval idea of introducing the poet, and second, it establishes the setting, in this case, the locus amoenus, in

which he will build the structure of his Marian symbolism. Berceo introduces himself by name, and then describes himself only in terms of his setting, with no personal details. He is lying in a beautiful meadow and sees all sorts of lovely images that he symbolically relates to the Virgin. The religious quality of these associations is never sermon-like nor heavily dogmatic; his meadow is more bucolic than mystical, more arboreal than sacred.

Halfway through the prologue he tells us, just in case we have missed the point, that the meadow is the Virgin Mary. In an equally simple way he describes the symbolic value of the things he sees around him: the four fountains are the four Gospels; the shadows of the trees, the prayers of Mary; the trees themselves are Mary's miracles; the birds are saints such as Augustine and Gregory; the song of the nightingale is that of the apostles; the flowers are the names of Mary. Mary herself is called a star, the star of the sea, queen, Gideon's fleece, fountain and a number of agriculturally related symbols such as vine, grape, almond tree and cedar, among others.<sup>13</sup> Berceo employs this symbolism by directly applying the symbols to tangible things in nature. The pradera siempre verde is not abstract, as he, Berceo, is in it.

Still speaking in the first person, Berceo asks for Mary's help in his project:

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c.f. Baldwin, p. 111 n. 12 of this chapter and F. J. E. Raby, History of Christian Latin Poetry from the Beginnings to the Close of the Middle Ages (Oxford: 1953), 2nd ed., Chapter XI, "Adam of S. Victor and the Regular Sequence," for an excellent, detailed discussion of standard medieval Marian symbolism.

Terrélo por miraculo que lo faz la Gloriosa  
 Si guiarme quisiere a mi en esta cosa:  
 Madre plena de gracia, Reyna poderosa,  
 Tu me guia en ello, ca eres piadosa.<sup>14</sup>

The way in which he refers to Mary in the above lines, as "Reyna poderosa," is an example of the way Berceo almost always uses his symbols for the Virgin. Berceo uses the standard symbols for Mary either as a form of direct address, as seen above, or to introduce her presence or explain her actions in a miracle. In all these cases, she is always referred to in the form of an appositive, such as "La virgen gloriosa, estrella de la mar" or "Acorrioli la Gloriosa, reyna general." The only time that Mary is referred to by a name other than her own, without the added appositive, is when she is called "La Gloriosa." Berceo refers to Mary by this name more than any other. As we have noted before, there is a definite parallel between the number and types of symbols utilized by the author and the number and types of roles portrayed by Mary. This is true in Berceo. With almost no exceptions, Berceo's images and symbols of Mary are gentle, life-giving parts of Nature itself. As we have seen in the discussion of some Marian stories, his Mary is always tender, accepting, forgiving, and never harsh or extreme in her behavior; she may reprimand but she never castigates. Even when piqued, we can imagine her gentle smile.

Berceo's poetic attitude is in the tradition of the juggler. He is indeed the "clérigo ajuglarado," the juggler-cleric of Spanish literature. Berceo creates a new Spanish

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Berceo, p. 12, stanza 46.

literary style by combining the juggler's formulas of oral contact with his audience with a new studied style of writing that forms a transition from the mester de juglaría, the art of the juggler, to the mester de clerecía, the art of the cleric.<sup>15</sup> Like the juggler, Berceo often addresses his audience directly at the beginning of his works.<sup>16</sup> Although he often plays the familiar stylistic role of the secular narrator at the beginning of his miracles ("De un otro miraclo vos querria contar"--Milagro XX), Berceo sometimes addresses his audience directly, as "amigos e vasallos," in the Introduction; as simply "amigos," in Milagros II and XXIII; as "sennores" in Milagro XXII; or as "sennores e amigos" in Milagros VIII and XXI. Gariano speaks at length about Berceo's genuine interest in the reader and how his working to maintain that interest by devices such as addressing the reader directly are integral to the development of his style.<sup>17</sup>

Although Berceo's development of a close relationship between reader and author is important to his style, his use of the first person cannot be considered as a device to establish this proximity. Perry explains this position in a medieval context:

Now when the Christian consciousness is dominant, the "I" sponsors a reflection on the author's personal spiritual destiny, while the "we" integrates

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<sup>15</sup>

Gariano, Análisis estilístico..., p. 187.

<sup>16</sup>

T. Anthony Perry, Art and Meaning in Berceo's "Vida de Santa Oria" (New York: 1968), p. 44.

<sup>17</sup>

Gariano, p. 154.

him into the larger community of Christians and emphasizes their common destiny (as, for example, in the frequent invocations). By contrast, Berceo's personal interventions, even when clearly religious in intent, may also have artistic functions. In such cases even the highly personal "I" tends to reveal not so much a personality as a series of distinct and often stylized narrative techniques. In the actual solution of compositional problems, however, Berceo resorts preferably to the "we" form...<sup>18</sup>

Berceo rarely uses "we" to begin a miracle (Milagro II, XIX). But he uses it very frequently at the end of a miracle, which is a neat solution to the compositional problems referred to by Perry. Almost without exception, the end of Berceo's stories is utilized for the author's opinion and comment. The nature of this solution, as described by Perry, is formulaic. The familiar "we" of didactic literature is used in the last stanzas of twelve of the twenty-five miracles.<sup>19</sup> The only time that Berceo refers to himself by name at the end of a story is in the miracle of Theophilus. He does so as a means of summation, as this story was originally intended to be the last in the book. Milagro XXV, La iglesia robada, is considered to have been written later and added to the original collection.<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps it is, above all, Berceo's gentleness, both in his characterization of Mary and his understanding of sinners and his lack of harsh moralizing that give the reader a feeling of close identification with the author and his material. Berceo makes Mary seem like an approachable woman; she is not the haughty Virgin of Gautier. His approach to

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<sup>18</sup>Perry, p. 26. For a contrasting view, supporting Berceo's works as "autobiographical" see Joaquín Artiles, Los Recursos Literarios de Berceo (Madrid: 1968), pp. 19-23.

<sup>19</sup>Milagros I, II, V, IX, XV, XVI, XVIII, XIX, XX, XXI, XXII, XXV.

<sup>20</sup>Berceo, intro. p. xxii.

her explains why "The distance between human and divine is reduced even further in Berceo through the almost total anthropomorphization of heaven."<sup>21</sup> Mary seems just as human and as likeable as the sinners she saves. Of all the Marian authors, the reader feels that he knows Berceo best. This "closeness" he establishes with the reader is not only the outcome of his concern for his audience, but also a direct result of his characterization of Mary. We feel we know Berceo because we are certain that we know his Mary.

Although the reader is always aware of Gautier's presence, it is not through explicit reference to his audience as in Berceo, but because of his didactic insistence which is underlined by the sermonizing that pervades his stories. When Gautier speaks in the first person to state his intentions, he does so in a more sophisticated way than Berceo, sounding like an aspiring lover and not a humble cleric:

Je ne truis pas por avoir pris  
Ne por robes ne por avoir,  
Mais por l'amor la dame avoir  
Qui tost revest les ames nues  
Et ses amans en porte es nues.  
Je ne truis pas por avoir robe,  
Mais por la dame que m'enrobe...<sup>22</sup>

Gautier divides his use of the first person between two attitudes, two different moods: that of the courtly lover and that of the solemn moralizer.

He maintains a didactic distance in his use of the first person, only telling us that the narrator is speaking. Unlike

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<sup>21</sup>

Perry, p. 26.

<sup>22</sup>

Gautier, II, 93, vv. 2322-28.



Berceo, Gautier does not use the "we" form as a means of developing a formulaic ending. Gautier has a standard ending to his miracles as well, but it is usually a third person annominatio that sums up the moral significance of the story and adorns it in an expressive manner.

Gautier uses certain expressions to assure the reader of the dependability of his sources, in expressions such as "Cis myracles bien nos ateste"<sup>23</sup> or "mes livres me dit."<sup>24</sup> Gautier uses many expressions that refer to written sources: "La lettre me dit et revele..."<sup>25</sup> "Tant truis escrit, foi que doi m'ame."<sup>26</sup> Berceo also refers to written sources very often. Joaquín Artiles attributes these frequent references to a lack of confidence on the part of Berceo as the medieval author who was only able to obtain a limited amount of source material.<sup>27</sup>

As in Berceo's, Gautier's prologue explains his intentions and later establishes his personal hierarchy of Marian symbolism. Gautier's prologue does not begin with the invocation of Mary and the identification of the author of the sort found in Berceo. Gautier identifies himself by name, but only at the end of the prologue: "Por ses myracles biau rimer,/ La langue Gautier de Coinsi,/ Qui por s'amor commence ainsi."<sup>28</sup> Like other authors of Marian miracles, his purpose is not to

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., IV, 39, v. 207.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., II, 246, v. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., IV, 73, v. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 110, v. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Joaquín Artiles, Los recursos literarios de Berceo..., p. 29.

<sup>28</sup> Gautier, I, 19, vv. 328-30.

create, but to translate and set into verse:

Miracles que truis en latin  
 Translater voel en rime et metre  
 Que cil et celes qui la letre  
 N'entendent pas puissent entendre  
 Qu'a son servise fait boen tendre.<sup>29</sup>

Gautier declares his humility ("ma povre science")<sup>30</sup> and asks Mary for her help.<sup>31</sup> We are not situated in Berceo's locus amoenus, or any specific place. Gautier, like Berceo, begins to enumerate the symbols that represent Mary; emerald,<sup>32</sup> gem, flower, rose, fountain, source, aqueduct, queen, empress. Gautier refers to Mary as "la pucele" with great frequency, as her virginity is considered by Gautier to be her most important characteristic. Later on, in the stories, Mary is also referred to as "aube"<sup>33</sup> and "estoile de mer."<sup>34</sup> Although many of these symbols are similar to those employed by Berceo, Gautier's use of symbols insists more on Mary's power than on her associations with Nature. The empress, one of Gautier's symbols never used by Berceo, is appropriate in that Gautier's Mary often acts as a terrestrial as well as celestial judge, as both a castigator and a fighting archangel.

Gautier's strong insistence on long moralizing asides and sermonizing passages is worthy of consideration, as such an emphasis is not seen in any other Marian author. While

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<sup>29</sup>

Ibid., p. 1, vv. 6-10.

<sup>30</sup>

Ibid., p. 3, v. 40.

<sup>31</sup>

Ibid., pp. 5-7, vv. 80-118.

<sup>32</sup>

Ibid., pp. 6-7, vv. 99-117.

<sup>33</sup>

Ibid., II, 29, v. 622.

<sup>34</sup>

Ibid., III, 53, v. 44.

Berceo gives an intermittent running commentary on the events of the miracle, he underplays any didactic purpose and is never highly critical nor insistent. Berceo also never attacks a specific group of people in a broad, general way. His gentle rebukes are only for the individual sinner in a specific situation. This is not the case in Gautier's stories.

Gautier's purpose is instructive and exemplary; he is the only author to tell us so in his prologue:

Por qu'ai ceste matere enprise,  
A traier si bien la m'apregne.  
Que boen essample aucuns i pregne  
Et qu'ele gie m'en daint savoir.<sup>35</sup>

Perhaps it is because of this definite statement of didactic purpose that Gautier insists on an instructional and moralizing tone throughout the Miracles, heavily interspersing his stories with a cleric's sermonizing. His favorite overall theme, frequently used in his moralizing asides, is contemptu mundi. A clear example of this theme is found in Gautier's version of Theophilus, as the disastrous effect of the desire for worldly goods and for the temporary glories of the terrestrial life is the central motivation of the story:

Theophile aime mienz aise,  
Richece, honeur et signorie  
Que ma dame sainte Marie,  
Que tant soloit devant amer...  
Bien doit avoir le cuer noirci  
Quant por un peu d'oneur terrestre  
A renoié le roi celestre  
Et au maufé vendue s'ame.<sup>36</sup>

A second category for Gautier's moralizing asides is comprised

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<sup>35</sup>  
Ibid., I, 2, vv. 16-19.

<sup>36</sup>  
Ibid., I, 83-84, vv. 548-551, 564-66.

of those passages of invective directed against a certain sin. Such is Gautier's attack on lust:

Cis myracles bien nos ensaigne  
Que clers ne moignes ne se praigne  
A lecherie n'a luxure.  
Que s'entente i met sa cure  
De s'ame perdre est curieus.  
Prestres que est luxurieus  
Si puant a le cors et l'ame  
Qu'a Dieu put et a Nostre Dame.<sup>37</sup>

Gautier's comments on the sin of sodomy are equally severe:

Il metent hic en toutes pars.  
La gramaire hic a hic acopple,  
Mais nature maldist la copple.  
La mort perpetuel engendre  
Cil qui aime masculin genre  
Plus que le feminin ne face,  
Et Diex de son livre l'esface.  
Nature rit, si com moi samble,  
Quant hic et hec joinnent ensamble,  
Mais hic et hic chose est perdue...<sup>38</sup>

Gautier often uses annominatio to emphasize his position against a specific sin. In one case he compares hypocrisy to the craftiness of the medieval Renart:

En Dieu n'a point de renardie  
N'ainc Diex n'ama pappelardie.  
Tex fait devant le pappelart  
Qui par derriere pappelart.  
Honie soit pappelardie:  
Ja por rienz que pappelars die  
Ne m'i appapelardirai  
Mais fi des pappelars dirai!<sup>39</sup>

The third category of themes utilized by Gautier in his moralizing passages contains attacks against specific groups in society. We have noticed in Chapter Two, in our discussion of themes, that Gautier often uses the lower classes as a model to hold up to the rich to humiliate them for their sins.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., III, 181, vv. 413-20.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., II, 52-53, vv. 1232-41.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., II, 58, vv. 1377-84.

But unlike Berceo, Gautier has no special nor charitable feelings for vilains:

Vilain sont si fol et si rude  
Que bestial sont comme bestes.  
Ne veillent mais garder les festes  
Ne faire riens que prestres die.<sup>40</sup>

This opinionated tirade lasts for another hundred lines. Some of Gautier's most bitter invective is reserved for the Jews:

As faus gyūs, as faus herites,  
Que confonde Sainz Esperites!  
Mout les haï et je si fas.  
Et Diex les het et je les has  
Et toz li mons les doit haïr,  
Car leur erreurs ne vielt chaïr.<sup>41</sup>

This attack continues for another two hundred forty-seven lines, including a description of the death of Jesus at the hands of the Jews. In much the same way that attacks on the Jews were a part of European medieval literature, so were attacks in thirteenth century French literature and sermons against the Mendicants. Gautier describes their wasp-like sting:

Par devant nos nos magnifient  
Et oignent toz par bele chiere,  
Mais plus poignant sont par derriere  
Que ne sont wespes et malot.<sup>42</sup>

Whatever the theme that Gautier chooses for such material, there are often many such passages interspersed within a single story. The length of these passages as a whole compared to the amount of narrative is related to the total length of each

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<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., IV, 168, vv. 354-57.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., IV, 168, vv. 207-12.

<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., II, 56, vv. 1324-27. C.f. Regalado, p. 139 and our Chapter Three for comments and bibliography.

miracle. A short piece of Gautier's such as De un provoire<sup>43</sup>  
qui toz jors chantoit "Salve" la messe de Nostre Dame,

is ninety-four lines long and contains no moralizing asides at all. A longer piece, such as Theophilus (2092 lines) contains a total of four hundred and ten lines of moralizing to 1682 lines of narrative, with moralizing occupying about twenty per cent of the story. The actual story does not begin until after a fourteen line introduction, unlike the shorter miracles in which the narrative begins with the first line.

In Theophilus, the greatest amount of moralizing material occurs at the end, comprising three hundred and seven lines. Berceo's story contains no moralizing at all and only the last sixteen lines are non-narrative, a prayer to Mary. A more  
 extreme situation is apparent in Gautier's D'un archevesque...<sup>44</sup>  
 in which 1797 of the 2356 lines are devoted to moralizing asides, making the moralizing material occupy more than fifty per cent of the story.

Since the amount of moralizing material in Gautier's stories is proportional to the length of his stories, it is useful to look at the two long stories mentioned above to see how Gautier uses transitions, and what these transitions are, in introducing moralizing or continuing narration. In the story of Theophilus, Gautier almost always uses the name Theophilus to indicate that either a moralizing aside is to begin or the narrative is about to continue. The long aside that ends this miracle begins with a common narrative device

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<sup>43</sup>

Ibid., II, 105-08.

<sup>44</sup>

Ibid., II, 5-94.

of Gautier's: "Cis myracles n'est pas de fables..."<sup>45</sup> And,

Et, luez, que Diex li renvoia,  
A droit chemin le ravoia  
Theophilus, quant se porpense,  
Del grant forfait et de l'offense  
Qu'a fait a Dieu et a sa mere...<sup>46</sup>

'Ne sai que dire ne que faire  
Se ta douceurs ne me regarde.  
M'ame et mon cors met en ta garde.'  
Theophilus quarante jors  
En abstinences et en plors  
Dedens le temple demora.<sup>47</sup>

In the case of Theophilus, the moralizing asides seem to fit in easily, partly because the narrative itself has a dramatic strength and the story is an exciting one. But the transitions are effective in making a complete whole because the moralizing asides are related directly to Theophilus. Gautier's devices are different in D'un archevesque.... Here, the use of dialogue usually reopens the narrative. In contrast to the story of Theophilus, D'un archevesque makes rather tiresome reading, as the narrative line is hard to follow. While the transitions are carefully developed, more than fifty per cent of the material is comprised of moralizing asides, passages that are totally unrelated to either the main character or the theme of the narrative.

Such extensive moralizing material is never found in Alfonso, whose point of view, form and type of narrative are different from the other Marian authors. His miracle stories are cantigas, intended to be sung, and the gallego-portugués

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., I, 157, v. 1785.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., I, 92-3, vv. 701-05.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 106, vv. 918-23.

tradition in which they are written lends them a specific structure and purpose. The role attributed to the Virgin in the Cantigas de Santa Maria is influenced by the Portuguese cantigas d'amor.<sup>48</sup> Alfonso's position in relation to Mary is a direct parallel to the male speaker in the cantiga d'amor who gently complains of the difficulties of platonic love. Alfonso establishes his position as an aspiring lover, as Gautier does, in the prologue. Both authors rely heavily on the lyric use of the first person. Like Gautier, Alfonso speaks of his humility and his limited capacity:

E maior eu esta duas non ey  
com' eu querria, pero provarei  
a mostrar ende un pouco que sei,  
confiand' en Deus, ond' o saber ven,  
ca per ele tenno que poderei  
mostrar do que quero algũa ren.<sup>49</sup>

He speaks of his courtly service to Mary:

E o que quero é dizer loor  
da Virgen, Madre de nostro Sennor,  
Santa Maria, que ést' a mellor  
cousa que el fez; e por aquest' eu  
quero seer oy mais seu trobador,  
e rogo-lle que me queira por seu  
Trobador...<sup>50</sup>

What is most interesting is Alfonso's originality in his choice of this form for the specific use of narration. His form closely follows another type of cantiga, the cantiga d'amigo. The original cantigas d'amigo sometimes contain dialogue or monologue "...quer até (caso raro mas muito significativo) de breve narrativa...Não se trata, no sentido actual da palavra, de poesia lírica mas de un género sincrético

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<sup>48</sup>

c.f. Our Chapter Three, p. 89 n.

<sup>49</sup>

Alfonso, I, 2, vv. 9-14.

<sup>50</sup>

Ibid., vv. 15-21.



primitivo em que se confundem o lírico, o dramático e o narrativo."<sup>51</sup> Other authors of Marian verse either write narratives, as in Berceo's and Gautier's miracles, or write non-narrative poems in praise of Mary, as does Gautier. The first combination of cantiga form and narrative belongs to Alfonso alone. While Alfonso uses the first person in much the same way as do Berceo and Gautier, he adds a very different element, found in no other Marian author. Alfonso appears as a dramatic character in many of his narratives, lending a contemporary, personalized feeling to the stories.<sup>52</sup> This entertaining feeling is very much in keeping with the total lack of didactic and religious material in the Cantigas. While the subject and unifying factor of the collection is sacred,<sup>53</sup> the narratives are unmistakably secular in mood and language. After considering the presence or absence of didactic material in the Marian authors, a certain pattern develops. The more an author adheres to a "popular" approach, thereby emphasizing the value of his stories as entertainment, the less religious and moralizing material his work contains. In order of most entertaining and least didactic is Alfonso, Berceo, Voragine and Gautier.

As we have seen, there is a relationship between the type and number of Marian symbols that the author utilizes and the varied roles that he assigns to Mary. Just as different

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<sup>51</sup> António José Saraiva and Oscar Lopes, História da literatura portuguesa, 6th ed. (Porto: 1969), p. 48.

<sup>52</sup> Keller, p. 68.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

passages in other authors represent Mary with different symbols, so does Mary's role change from one passage to the next in these author's texts. But neither Alfonso's prologue nor his Cantigas use any Marian symbolism whatever, and his Mary only plays one role. She is always the same sweet, intervening spirit; her behavior is never extreme, a characteristic she shares with Berceo's Virgin. But unlike the portrait of Mary that Berceo paints, Alfonso's is just a spirit, a presence, rather remote and predictable, however benign, while Berceo's character is a dramatic personage who not only changes her mood but also changes her mind.

Alfonso, like Berceo, Voragine and Gautier, uses his prologue as a guide to the material that follows it. He clearly establishes his purpose at the beginning:

Porque trobar é cousa en que jaz  
entendimento, poren queno faz  
á-o d'aver e de razõ assaz,  
per que entenda e sábia dizer  
o que entend' e de dizer lle praz,  
ca ben trobar assi s'a de ffazer.<sup>54</sup>

Alfonso's desire to write well ("ben trobar") is reflective of the literary preoccupation of his time. The art of "composing (of) lyrical pieces in verse according to the art of the troubadors" was regarded in Alfonso's time as the highest expression of literary genius.<sup>55</sup> Unlike the other authors, who do not follow the same lyric tradition, Alfonso specifically claims that he will abandon all other women in

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<sup>54</sup>

Alfonso, I, 2, vv. 3-8.

<sup>55</sup>

Keller, p. 66.

this enterprise: "...querrei-me leixar de trobar des i por  
 outra dona..."<sup>56</sup> This courtly attitude is part of Alfonso's  
 position as troubador:

Alfonso, instead of lauding the physical, amatory  
 and other charms of a mortal woman, sang in his  
 sacred cantigas the praises of Our Lady, and in a  
 spirit of gratitude, deep respect and spiritual  
 love, related her miracles. He regarded her,  
 and not some earthly lady, in his songs as the  
 exemplification of the perfect qualities of woman-  
 hood. If an amorous tone occasionally obtains in  
 his hymns and miracles, it is but a reflection of  
 the troubador school of poetry under whose rules  
 he wrote.<sup>57</sup>

Alfonso's choice of form seems to be the perfect vehicle for  
 the lyric, courtly attitude that the narrator assumes in the  
Cantigas de Santa Maria.

By employing various criteria, we have tried to show that  
 each of the four authors, writing about the same subject at  
 approximately the same time, maintains a discernible individuality.  
 To further focus on specific aspects of individual style in  
 a comparative manner, it is necessary to take an excerpt from  
 each work and briefly compare and contrast why that excerpt  
 is relevant to the author's work as a whole and how each  
 author develops a distinctive way of presenting a Marian story.  
 An interesting anecdotal miracle told by Voragine gives us  
 sufficient material to analyze. It is the only story in the  
Legenda Aurea in which the Christ-child appears. As we  
 have noted in Chapter Three, such a representation of Christ  
 is unusual in Marian miracles, and occurs only once in Berceo

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<sup>56</sup>

Alfonso, I, 2, vv. 24-25.

<sup>57</sup>

Keller, p. 79.

and not at all in Gautier or Alfonso. The story concerns a distraught woman whose son has been put in prison: after asking for Mary's help in vain, she decides to take the image of the Christ-child away from her statue as retribution:

Quaedam mulier solatio viri sui destituta unicum filium habebat, quem tenerrime diligebat. Quadam autem vice filius ejus ab inimicis capitur et in custodia carceratur et vinculatur. Quod illa audiens inconsolabiliter flebat et beatam virginem, cui multum devota erat, pro liberatione filii importunis precibus exorabat. Tandem videns, quod sic nihil proficeret, ecclesiam, in qua erat sculpta imago beatæ Mariæ, sola intravit et coram imagine stans ipsam sic alloquitur dicens: virgo beata, pro liberatione filii mei te saepe rogavi et adhuc nequaquam matri miserae subvenisti, patrociniū tuum pro filio meo imploro et nullum adhuc sentio fructum. Igitur, sicut filius meus mihi ablatus est, sic et ego filium tuum tibi auferam et obsidem pro filio meo in custodiam ponam. Et hæc dicens propius accessit et imaginem pueri, quam ergo in gremio bajulabat, auferens domum abiit accipiensque imaginem pueri ipsam in linteo mundissimo involvit et in archa escondens ipsam cum clave diligentius obfirmavit, bonum obsidem filio suo habere gaudens et ipsum diligenter custodiens. Et ecce sequenti nocte beata virgo juveni apparuit et janua caracera aperiens, inde ut exeat, præcepit eique dixit: matri tuæ, dices, ut meum reddat filium, ex quo reddidi sibi suum. Qui exiens ad matrem venit, et qualiter beata virgo cum liberaverit, enarravit. Illa autem plurimum exsultans imaginem pueri accepit et ad ecclesiam vadens beatæ Mariæ reddidit filium dicens: gratias vobis, domina, refero, quia mihi meum unicum filium reddistis, et nun vobis filium vestrum reddo, quia meum me recipesse profiteor.<sup>59</sup>

The above passage is the complete text of the miracle. A preliminary grammatical analysis of the passage gives us some relevant information about the author's style. Almost all the verbs are in a Latin past tense (perfect, imperfect) if they are used as part of the narration, but the present and future are used only in dialogue. There is a wide use of gerundives (fourteen) that lend a certain liveliness to the narrative. Voragine introduces dialogue by sometimes using

"dicens" (when the mother speaks on two occasions) and once using "dixit" (when Mary speaks). Such a variation in tense differentiates the speeches of the characters. The combination of gerundives and present and future tenses in the mother's first speech gives her dialogue an animation that makes her an effective dramatic character, and not just a plastic figure in a narrative. The gerundives also imply a constant sense of action and movement, both in plot and physical action of the characters within the narrative. ("auferens," "escondens," "vadens,").

Voragine's choice of adjectives is not particularly original nor successfully descriptive. Most of the adjectives used significantly apply to Mary and to the woman's son, giving the impression that the woman is really telling the story, although we know that Voragine is the narrator. The most widely used adjectives are possessive ("meum unicum filium" and other references to her son), thereby indicating the son's importance to his mother. Voragine's use of adverbs is more interesting, however, for aside from the standard "saepe" and "igitur" he uses descriptive adverbs like "diligenter" and "inconsolabiliter."

In keeping with the place that Voragine gives to Mary in the Legenda Aurea, a position not more honored than that of any saint, Mary's actual appearances and speaking parts are never unusually long or dramatic. In this passage, for example, the mother speaks twice to Mary's once, and her explanations are more detailed than Mary's. Mary's only spoken line is to the son when she lets him out of prison.

Such a limited spoken role is rare for Mary in the stories by other Marian authors. The actual proportion of narration to dialogue is almost exactly three to one in this passage, a proportion representative of all Voragine's Marian stories in which there is dialogue.

When Voragine's narrative begins, the boy is already in jail and we find ourselves in media res. But the author is not particularly interested in the previous events; he wants to go on with the miracle: we only know that the boy has been taken "ab inimicis" and the verbs describing what has happened to him are all passive, indicating no participants ("capitur," "carceratur," "vinculatur."). The Virgin only appears toward the end of the narrative, and her appearance is anti-climactic in comparison with the mother's seizing the image of Jesus. All other action in the narrative seems subordinated to the mother's revenge on Mary; the reader knows that Mary will appear and set things right as she always does. But we are definitely surprised at the mother's extreme action in order to get back her son. The importance of Mary to the narrative is only suggested at the beginning when the author tells us of the woman's devotion to her, but since a sinner devoted to Mary is a standard character in these stories, the information Voragine gives us does not actually tell us anything about Mary as a dramatic character.

Characterization is one of Berceo's strong points, and his delightful creation of the abbess is a totally believable figure. The success of both Mary and the abbess as literary

figures can be seen in these lines in which the abbess prays  
for Mary's help and Mary answers:

- 520       'Tu acorraste, Sennora, a Theophilo que era desesperado,  
Que du su sangre fizo carta con el peccado,  
Por el tu buen conseio fue reconsiliado,  
Onde todos los omnes te lo tienen a grado.
- 521       Tu acorraste, Sennora, a la Egiptiana,  
Que fué peccador mucho, ca fué muger liviana:  
Sennora, benedicta, de qui todo bien mana,  
Dame algun conseio ante de la mannana.
- 522       Sennora benedicta, non te pódí servir;  
Pero amé te siempre laudar e bendezir:  
Sennora, verdat digo e non cuydo mentir,  
Querria seer muerta sy podiesse morir.
- 523       Madre del Rey de gloria de los cielos Reigna,  
Mane de la tu gracia alguna medicina,  
Libra de mal porfazo una muger mezquina:  
Esto si tu quisieres, puede seer ayna!
- 524       Madre, por el amor del Fijo querido,  
Fijo tan sin embrago, tan dulce e tan cumplido,  
Non finque repoiada, esta mercet te pido,  
Ca veo que segudan sobre grant apelido.
- 525       Si non prendes, Sennora, de mi algun conseio,  
Veo mal aguisada de salir a conseio:  
Aqui quiero morir, en esto logareio,  
Ca sy allá salliero, ferme an mal trebeio.
- 526       Reyna coronada, templo de castidat,  
Fuente de misericordia, torre de salvedat,  
Fes en aquesta cuyta alguna piadat,  
En mi non se agote la tu grant piadat.
- 527       Quiero contra to Fijo dar a ti por fianza,  
Que nunca más no torne en aquesta erranza:  
Madre, si fallesziero, fes en mi tal venganza,  
Que todo el mundo fable de la mi malandanza..
- 528       Tan afincadamente fizo su oration,  
Que la oió la Madre llena de benedicion:  
Como qui amodorrida vio grant vision,  
Tal que devia en omne façer edifficacion.
- 529       Traspúsosé la duenna con la grant cansedad,  
Dios lo obrava todo por la su piadat,  
Apareciól la Madre del Rei de magestad,  
Dos angeles con ella de mui gran claridad.

- 530           Ovo pavor la duenna e fo mal espantada,  
               Ca de tal viSSION nunqua era usada,  
               De la grand claridad fo mucho enbargada,  
               Pero de la su cuita fo mucho alleviada.
- 531           Dissoli la Gloriosa: 'Aforzad, abbadesa,  
               Bien estades comigo, non vos pongades quessa,  
               Sepades que vos traio mui buena promessa,  
               Meior que non querrie la vuestra prioressa.
- 532           Non aiades nul miedo de caer en porfazo,  
               Bien vos a Dios guradada de caer en eslaço,  
               Bien lis hid aosadas a tenerlis el plazo,  
               Non lazará por esso el vuestro espinazo.'
- 533           Al sabor del solat de la Virgo gloriosa  
               Non sintiendo la madre del dolor nulla cosa,  
               Nació la creatura, cosiella mui fermosa,  
               Mandóla a los angeles prender la Gloriosa.<sup>60</sup>

A brief grammatical analysis will show how Berceo's style is an appropriate representation of his simplicity in the narrative. This simplicity is reflected in his uncomplicated use of grammar, as his affection is reflected in the way in which he portrays the abbess and Mary. The abbess recounts her sad story in the preterite, as Berceo relates his narrative. Shifts in tense are rare for the abbess, so that when she makes them a dramatic effect results: "Querria seer muerta sy podiesse morir." (522 d) The abbess tells of her actual situation in the simple present, lending an element of credibility and liveliness to her portrayal as a highly successful dramatic character, as we have seen in Chapter Three. When Mary speaks, she uses the imperative (531, 532).. Yet, unlike Gautier's Mary, who uses the imperative continually in her appearance in his miracles, Mary rarely uses the command form in Berceo's other stories.



Berceo is well known for his infrequent but picturesque use of adjectives.<sup>61</sup> Besides using adjectives as modifiers (e.g. "grand," "aquesta," "vuestra," "fermosa,") Berceo uses them to create a specific impression. To contrast the position of the sinner with Mary's greatness, Berceo uses Theophilus as a standard literary model of repentance, and has the abbess describe him as "desesperado"(520a). The abbess further implores Mary by the standard reference to Mary the Egyptian, a "muger liviana" (521b), a common medieval reference for a fallen woman. If Mary has been able to help the Egyptian, she could surely help the abbess, who is only a "muger mezquina," an adjective denoting a pitiable condition, not a moral offense. The abbess cleverly makes her sins diminish and her chances for salvation increase. She also appeals to Mary by speaking kindly of her Son: "Fijo querido...tan dulce e cumplido..." (524 a,b). Berceo's use of adverbs is not as original as his use of adjectives, employing standard ones most of the time (such as "sin embargo," "mui," and "nunqua"). In one case, Berceo follows a description of time with an adverb several lines later. The abbess describes the immediacy of the need for Mary's help: "Dame algun conseio ante de la mannana." (521d) She tells Mary that her redemption can be achieved through the Virgin's intervention: "Esto si tu quisieres, puede seer ayna!"

Berceo's metaphors are often simple, but always descriptive. then the abbess speaks of Mary's redemption of Theophilus she talks of Mary's retrieving the "carta con el peccado" (521d)

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Gariano, p. 118.

from Hell. When Mary talks of her protection of the abbess, she reassures her that she will be protected from "caer en es lazo." (532b) In one instance, Berceo uses a medical metaphor to describe Mary's redeeming power "Mane de la tu gracia alguna medicina" (523b) in much the same way that Gautier does: "Se li done ele tel mecine/ Plus oelt soef qu'espece fine."<sup>62</sup> But two of the metaphors Berceo uses in the above passage are particularly vivid and appealing. The abbess describes the unfortunate situation that she will be in if Mary does not help her: "...ferme an mal trebeio," (525d) which Solalinde translates as "me han de hacer mal juego."<sup>63</sup> The other metaphor is particularly one of my favorites in Berceo's works. Mary is telling the abbess not to give up, to have courage, by telling her not to lose her backbone: "Non lazrara por esso el vuestro espinazo." (532d)

La abadesa encinta is one of the few Milagros in which the author uses more than occasional Marian symbolism. It is also the only milagro in which more than two symbols for Mary appear in consecutive order. The abbess uses four such consecutive symbols as she addresses Mary: "Reygna coronada, templo de castidat/ Fuente de misericordia, torre de salvedat." (526 a,b) The abbess addresses Mary as "Sennora" or, more significantly, "Madre" when speaking of her Son, and therefore implying a common bond between them.

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<sup>62</sup>

Gautier, II, 288-89, vv. 91-92, and many other examples.

<sup>63</sup>

Berceo, p. 125, n.2.

While there are no specific transitional devices used by Berceo in this story in maintaining the narrative while using stanza form, it is obvious that Berceo manages well without them. Aside from the repetitive quality of the rhymes, the reader's interest in the narrative line is never broken by the beginning or ending of a stanza. In his other milagros and his other works, Berceo sometimes uses the reiteration of the last line of the preceding stanza to begin the next stanza, thereby assuring the continuity of the narrative. But no such device is used in La abadesa encinta.

As we have seen in our previous chapter, Berceo's portrayal of Mary suggests a very tender, wise and sympathetic lady. Perhaps this is why the use of the imperative is not characteristic of Mary's speeches, for in the lines in which the command form is used, the reader derives the impression of enthusiastic support and a spur to action, not of imperious direction. She assures the abbess that everything will be all right "Aforzad, abbadesa,/ Bien estades comigo..." (531 a). Mary, like Berceo, never moralizes or sermonizes. A general theme of the milagros emerges here: Mary and the sinner she will save present a united front in the true spirit of camaraderie; the feeling of "us against them" pervades Berceo's work. Yet while Berceo's Virgin is popular, she is also powerful, as she creates a miracle: "Nació la creatura, cosiella mui hermosa" (533c). Berceo's commentary on the child ("cosiella mui hermosa") is the only such opinion he gives throughout the narrative. As in all his stories, La abadesa encinta is totally free of moralizing.

The abbess' prayer to the Virgin is an integral dramatic part of the story. Such prayers are found in thirteen of Berceo's twenty-five stories.<sup>64</sup> But the extensive use of dialogue is not representative of all the milagros. La abadesa encinta has one hundred twenty-six lines of dialogue out of a total narration of three hundred twenty-eight lines. El milagro de Teófilo has a more overwhelming proportion of dialogue to narration, three hundred thirty-three lines to a total of six hundred sixty-one. But all the other milagros show an average of about ten per cent of their total lines devoted to dialogue if dialogue is used at all. It is certainly significant that Berceo's most successful stories are those in which he relies most heavily on dialogue. In a story such as La abadesa or Teófilo, it seems that Berceo has established a complete equilibrium between mood, dramatic narrative, and language. It is as if, to the reader, these three elements are inseparable, and yet the end product, the milagro as a whole, is equal to more than the sum of its parts.

A look at a representative passage from Gautier's Miracles de Nostre Dame will also show how individually identifiable factors such as grammar, language, mood, and especially the portrayal of Mary form a well-constructed, unified whole. In Dou clerc mort en cui boche on trova la flor, a recently deceased monk is the center of controversy. Since he has been known as a womanizer, while being totally devoted to Mary, the other monks refuse to bury him in sacred ground.

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Milagros I, II, IV, IX, X, XI, XVII, XIX, XX, XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXIV.

Mary not only appears to defend him against the others, but performs a miracle as well: the dead monk is found, inside the coffin, with a lovely, live rose in his mouth:

- 56        La mere Dieu li dist adonques:  
           'Ce fu li clers, fait ele, frere,  
           Que fors de vostre cymetere  
           L'autrier si vilment, enfoïstes.
- 60        Assez de honte li foïstes  
           Trente jors a, ne plus ne mains.  
           Sovente fois a jointes mains  
           S'agenoïlla devant m'ymage.
- 65        Quelz folz qu'il fust en son corage,  
           Avoit mout bon proposement.  
           A chaudes larmes doucement  
           Me saluoit et jor et nuit.
- 68        Cuidiez vos donc qu'il ne m'anuit  
           Quant vous l'avez si adossé  
           Que mis l'avez en un fossé?  
           Metez l'en fors, je le commant.
- 72        Di le clergie que je li mant  
           Ne me puet mie rapaier  
           Se le matin sanz delaier  
           A grant honeur n'est mes amis
- 76        Ou plus biau liu de l'aitre mis.'  
           Tout le clergie li clers assamble  
           Bien matinet. A toz ensamble  
           Tout em plorant dit et commande
- 80        Ce que la mere Dieu lor mande,  
           Chascuns le tient a grant merveille,  
           Chascuns se saingne et esmerveille.  
           Au clerc s'en corent clerc et lai;
- 84        Desfoï l'ont sanz nul delai,  
           Car volontiers chascuns i toche.  
           Une fleur treuvent en sa bouche  
           Si fremiant et si florïe
- 88        Com se luez droit fust espanie.  
           Chascun l'egarde a grant merveille.  
           La langue avoit ausi vermeille  
           Com est en mai rose novele.<sup>65</sup>

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Gautier, II, 11-12, vv. 56-91.

Gautier uses the tenses of the verb to indicate distinct comparisons of time in the narrative. The shift in tense from the expression of actions already concluded in the story to the dramatic emphasis on the present and Mary's decision, and back to the past is seen in vv. 81-91. Gautier makes the reader a participant by relating Mary's feelings in the present tense ("tient," "se saigne," "esmerveille," "corent") but changes the tense to lend a sense of past events established to the narration ("desfoi," "fust," "avoit"). We must assume that the medieval reader was familiar with the ending of a miracle contained in a popular collection whose theme is treated by all the Marian authors, and therefore, each author did not show his originality in the recounting of the events of the narrative leading up to the inevitable conclusion. The author's mark of individuality was made in his personal way of shading and emphasizing certain events. But above all, each Marian author's portrayal of Mary becomes his trademark. Mary uses the imperative only three times in the passage from Gautier quoted above ("cuidiez," "metez," "di") but the imperiousness of her tone is reinforced by the verbs "je le commant" and "je li mant," in lines 71-72. While the imperative mood is incidental in Berceo's depiction of the Virgin, it is an integral part of the attitudes and personality that Gautier attributes to Mary.

Gautier's uses of adjectives is not particularly extensive nor original in this passage, but when Mary speaks, those

adjectives she uses are qualitative and positive: "A grant honneur n'est mes amis/ Ou plus biau liu de l'aitre mis." (vv. 75-76). The most vivid use of adjectives in the lines quoted is found in the final two verses of the passage: "La langue avoit ausi vermeille/ Com est en mai rose novele." (vv. 90-91) The image of the red rose, as used by the Marian authors, is of special interest. Mary herself, or any references to her and the characters in her favor in the Marian stories as a rose, are always associated with the color red. This choice is interesting, as the standard Christian symbolism, especially in art, chose the white rose as a symbol of purity and the red rose as a symbol of martyrdom.<sup>66</sup> This is a possible parallel to the sinners who have suffered in order to enter heaven, as such sinners are represented in medieval literature as entering heaven wearing or carrying red roses. Gautier's use of such adjectives serves primarily a dramatic purpose. One of Gautier's standard descriptions for a repentant sinner as crying "chaudes larmes" is an often-used symbol of repentance in medieval religious literature. Gautier often repeats a phrase for the coming together of a varied group of people: "s'en corent clerc et lai." He uses adverbs more frequently, and in this passage, more effectively. His variation of adverbs is more noticeable than that of any other Marian author. His variation of tenses of the verb is appropriately modified by his choice of adverbs. The adverbs of place ("devant,"

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<sup>66</sup> George Ferguson, Signs and Symbols in Christian Art (New York: 1961), p. 38. c.f. Jarnstrom, E., ed. Recueil de chansons pieuses..., Ser B, 3, p. 44, I for an example of Mary as the red rose in chansons. For an example of Mary as both the white and the red rose, a usage never seen in the narratives, see Ibid., p. 84, I.

"fors de,") add a descriptive element to the details provided by the rest of the sentence. The adverbs of time ("adonques," "quelz folz," "quant") lend a sense of specificity to the moment they describe. The descriptive adverbs ("vilment," "assez de," "mout bon," "douceement," "bien," "volontiers") add significant dramatic touches to the story. Perhaps the most effective example of Gautier's use of adverbs is the specific command of Mary's "trente jors a, ne plus ne mains." (v. 61)

Gautier does not use a lyric form as does Berceo. Instead, he employs a rhymed narrative form, octosyllabic two-line couplets. In the thirteenth century, there is a flourishing of longer verse narratives, such as Le Roman de Th  bes and L'Ene  s.<sup>67</sup> There also are examples of long prose narratives in the thirteenth century, such as Le Lancelot-Graal<sup>68</sup> and Le Tristan en prose,<sup>69</sup> and the short prose and verse narrative Aucassin et Nicolette.<sup>70</sup> Saints' lives are almost always dealt with in verse, but secular lives are sometimes related in prose, as in the Proven  al collection of lives of the troubadors.<sup>70</sup> In thirteenth century Italy we have the short prose narratives in the collection of the Fioretti di San Francesco.<sup>71</sup> There is also a collection of short verse

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<sup>67</sup> J. C. Payen, Le Moyen Age I: Des origines    1300 (Paris: 1970), pp. 148-49.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 166-68.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>70</sup> Jean Bouti  re and A. H. Schutz, eds. Biographies des troubadours (Paris: 1950),

<sup>71</sup> De Sanctis, The History of Italian Literature..., I, 120-21.



narratives, some dealing with moral and didactic themes that  
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 are done in stanzas.

As we have noted in this and in previous chapters, long moralizing digressions are an integral part of Gautier's Miracles, and of no other Marian author. There is no moralizing in the story that contains the passage quoted above. But, as previously noted, the length of the story determines whether or not Gautier includes moralizing material. Dou clerc mort en cui boche on trova la flor is only one hundred twenty-four lines long. Of the fifty-nine narratives in Gautier's collection, seventeen contain lengthy moralizing digressions, these seventeen representing the longest narratives in the collection. The Virgin's speeches are an integral part of a Marian miracle, as they invariably produce a dramatic effect. Of Gautier's fifty-nine narratives, sixteen contain speeches by Mary, and of those sixteen, there are eight miracles in which her speeches dominate the narration. Gautier uses Mary's speeches in the same structural way that he uses moralizing: her lines of dialogue are lengthier and more dramatically important in the eight longest miracles. Gautier also emphasizes Mary's importance in the stories, as do the other authors, by centering the miracle around her appearance. All previous events in the narration only lead up to the first appearance of the Virgin: all later events create the effect of a dénouement. Gautier's constant reference to Mary as "la pucele" is very much in keeping with his textual insistence on her chastity

in particular and the virtue of chastity in general, as seen in the long non-narrative sermonizing piece Des nonains de Nostre Dame de Soissons.<sup>73</sup>

Gautier's stories invariably end with the moralizing figure cast in an annominatio figure, as in the story quoted above, page 138:

- 112        Oir poez qui por la mere  
             Le roi dou ciel ses genolz ploie  
             Que sa painne bien i emploie.  
             Qui ses plois vielt bien emploier
- 116        En si fait ploi se doit ploier.  
             Sa painne bien i emploia,  
             Quant ses genolz por li ploia,  
             Li clers qui ert se desploiez.
- 120        Nus n'est en mal si emploiez  
             La mere Dieu ne l'en desploie  
             Mais qu'il a li servir s'aploit.  
             En li servir a riche emploite.
- 124        Son exploit fait qui s'en exploite.<sup>74</sup>

The final figures are never narrative, but always moralizing and didactic. The length of the final figure is also relative to the length of the story. A longer story, such as D'un archevesque... ends with a series of annominatio figures of approximately eight to fourteen lines per set. While Berceo joins the separate elements of his narratives in order to make a unified whole, Gautier carefully structures the formal parts of his miracle: narration, moralizing, Mary's speeches, and annominatio figure conclusion, presenting the reader with a well-ordered if overly didactic finished product.

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<sup>73</sup>

Gautier, III, 460-505.

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Ibid., II, 113, vv. 112-24.

There is an interesting relationship between Gautier's Miracles and his non-narrative chansons in praise of Mary and between Gautier's work as a whole and other French religious songs written at the same time.<sup>75</sup> Gautier's presentation of Marian symbolism is of about equal frequency and variation in the chansons and the miracles. He also uses many annominatio<sup>76</sup> figures in the chansons, some of which occupy the entire poem. But other pious songs to Mary of the period show us certain marked differences. These songs are always non-narrative in content. The portrayal of Mary seen in the narratives is replaced by the extensive use of symbolism to represent her. The use of symbolism in these anonymous songs is far more extensive than Gautier's in his miracles and chansons, and more varied than any of the other Marian authors under consideration. While these chansons utilize some of the Marian references that Gautier uses ("la saint pucelle," p. 22, I; "la douce mere Dé," p. 26, I; "glorieuse empereriz," p. 27, V; "esmeraude,"

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All the following references to religious songs will be from these works: E. Järnström, ed. Recueil de chansons pieuses de XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, I (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, Ser. B, 3, No. 10), (Helsinki: 1910) and E. Järnström and A. Långfors, eds. Recueil de chansons pieuses du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, II (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, Ser. B, 20, No. 4) (Helsinki: 1927). Since both the separate chansons and the strophes within each chanson are designated in this text by roman numerals, my own reference will be to page number and strophe in which the expression is found on that page.

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Gautier, I, 24-28.

p. 31, III; "l'estoile, mere au soleil," p. 69, I; "la lumiere," p. 74, III and many others) there are many interesting and significant uses of Marian symbolism not found in any of the narratives I have studied. Among these are: "Damedie<sup>x</sup>," p. 25, IV, 29, IV, 34, V, et al.; "chambre de la deite<sup>e</sup>," p. 27, V; "dame dou mont," p. 23, "roine dou mont," "dame de vaillance," p. 25, V; "la gloriouse fenix," p. 30, I;<sup>77</sup> "columbe de relegion," p. 57, IV; "la miniere," "inginiere," p. 74, IV<sup>78</sup> and many, many others. Although the chansons are non-narrative, the motifs from a liturgical text, as mentioned in Chapter Two (such as the letters of the name MARIA and the play on AVE-EVA),<sup>79</sup> are utilized in the songs in this collection as well as in those of Gautier.

This use of a lyric form for a non-narrative praise of Mary is an effective contrast to Alfonso el Sabie's use of the cantiga for the narration of a Marian miracle. The following passage is the text of a complete cantiga, describing the experience of a simple monk who dedicates a special hymn to the five letters of Mary's name. When he dies, a rose bush with five roses springs from his mouth:

5            Gran dereit' é de seer  
               seu miragre mui fremoso  
               da Virgen. de que nacer  
               quis por nos Deus grorioso.

Poren quero retraer

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77

The editors note that this expression is also used by Rutebeuf to refer to the Virgin, p. 32n.

78

All quotes on this page up to this point are from the first volume of the collection.

79

Järnstrom and Långfors, II, 43-45, I-VI; 54, III.

10 un miragre que oy,  
 ond' averedes prazer  
 oyndo-o outrossi,  
 per que podeades saber  
 o gran ben, com' aprendi,  
 que a Virgen foi fazer  
 15 a un bon religioso.  
Gran dereit' é de seer...80

Este sabia leer  
 pouco, com' oy contar,  
 mas sabia ben querer  
 20 a Virgen que non á par;  
 e poren foi compõer  
 cinque sálmos e juntar,  
 por en ssa loor crecer,  
 de que era desejoso.  
 25 Gran dereit' é de seer...

Dos salmos foi escoller  
 conque por esta razon  
 e de ssuu os pœr  
 por cinque letras que son  
 30 en Maria, por prender  
 dela pois tal galardón,  
 per que podesse veer  
 o seu Fillo piadoso.  
Gran dereit' é de seer...

35 Quen catar e revolver  
 estes salmos, achará  
 'Magnificat' y jazer,  
 e 'Ad Dominum' y á,  
 e cabo del 'In Conver-  
 40 tendo' e 'Ad te' está,  
 e pois 'Retribue ser-  
 vo tuo' muit' omildoso.  
Gran dereit' é de seer...

45 Pera ben de Deus aver  
 ond' aquestes, sen falir,  
 salmos sempr' ya dizer  
 cada dia, sen mentir  
 ant' o altar e tender-  
 se todo e repentir  
 50 do que fora merecer  
 quand' era fol e astroso.  
Gran dereit' é de seer...

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 80

While the Mettmann text only repeats the first line in every refrain, it is essential to know that the refrains existed in their full form, making the piece a cantiga.

55        Est' uso foi mantêer  
            mentre no mundo viveu;  
            mas pois, quand' ouv' a morrer,  
            na boca ll' aparceu  
            rosal, que viron têer  
            cinco rosas, e creceu  
 60        porque fora béeizer  
            a madre do Poderoso.  
            Gran dereit' e de seer...81

The choice of cantiga form gives Alfonso a narrow field in which to set up his rhyme scheme. There are no exceptions to his rules. The only -er, -ar, and -ir rhymes are infinitive endings of verbs, and such infinitive forms are used thirty-six times in the above narration. All rhymes ending in -o are adjectives, thereby simplifying the pattern even further. The choice of adjectives is significant, as each adjective is an expression of a positive moral or spiritual quality ("gremoso," "grorioso," "religioso," "desejoso," "piadoso," "omildoso") with the exception of the last one used, "astroso," which suggests foolishness. All the other adjectives are not only representative of positive qualities, but also of characteristics that Mary particularly values: piety, humility, and so on. All other variations of rhymes are limited to one per stanza: -í, first person singular preterite ending for the second stanza; -ón noun ending for the fourth; -á, verb ending for the fifth; -eu, preterite third person singular ending for the seventh.

The use of Latin words offset by quotation marks to symbolize, one by one, the letters of Mary's name, is very

effective visually, as it not only makes the reader notice a "foreign" language (in this case, Latin) but also makes the listener wait for each of the five verses in sequence, as they are announced by the Latin words. This effect can be approximated if the modern reader reads the lines out loud. The use of the refrain also appeals to both the reader and the listener, and in no way hampers the narrative flow. I found that it increases the musicality of an already lilting narrative, and reminds the reader of the central point of the story by bringing him back to the glories of Mary. Like Berceo, Alfonso's adherence to stanzaic form in no way makes for an interruption of the narrative, nor does it hamper the flow of the story from one refrain to the next.

The subject matter of the cantiga quoted above is a familiar one, dealt with by all the Marian authors. The key to the story is found in lines 12-14: "...podedes saber/ e gran ben, com' aprendi;/ que a Virgen foi fazer/ a un bon religioso." This is as much as we know about Mary, as she never appears. We know that the ending will be a happy one as soon as we read the formulaic "mas sabia ben quere/ a Virgin que non a par;" (vv. 19-20). There is little characterization of the monk, as he is only represented by his actions or those events happening to him. The psalm containing the letters of Mary's name is more centrally important to the dramatic development of the story than is the figure of the monk himself. The parallels between the five letters, five prayers, and the five roses underline the medieval preference for the number five as the Marian number par excellence.

Mary rarely speaks in the collection Cantigas de Santa Maria, and when she is accorded lines, her feelings and actions are conveyed through the narrator's words more than through her own. Alfonso prefers giving dialogue to his "earthly" characters, in keeping with the "secularization" of his sacred subject. Alfonso's emphasis seems to be placed on the reactions of his characters rather than on the actions of Mary. Of all the considerations that we have dealt with in this chapter that determine the individual trademark of the Marian author, it is this singular portrayal of Mary that must stand as each author's personal definition of the purpose of a Marian miracle.

Since the characterization of Mary is the most essential defining factor of Marian literature, the success or failure of this characterization becomes the reader's link to each author's style. The relationship between the presence of the author and the effectiveness of his miracles can be measured when Mary appears as a dramatic character in the theater. There are two groups of Marian plays. In the first, the characterization of Mary is highly successful, but she is confined to a single role. We know the authors of most of these plays, and can feel their personal touch in their portraits of Mary. In the second group, however, Mary is a very unappealing, plastic figure who again has only one role, albeit a different one. These plays are anonymous. It does not seem coincidental that Mary appeals to us most effectively when her author appeals to us as well.



## CHAPTER FIVE: FROM NARRATIVE TO DRAMATIC MARIAN MIRACLES

The characterization of Mary within a literary framework is the single most important element in any work of Marian literature. There are three basic groups of such Marian literature: first, the chansons pieuses, which are the lyric, non-narrative songs of Gautier and other authors; second, the short narrative miracle stories; and third, the miracle plays. In the first group, that of the songs in praise of Mary, the Virgin never has an identifiable dramatic personality. In the second group, the narrative miracles, Mary is vividly and believably described in varied and detailed roles. The representation of Mary in literature changes again in the third group, that of the Marian plays, the last major aspect of her literary representation to be considered here. We must first briefly examine the beginnings of the religious theater in Spain, Italy, and France to establish a background for the presentation of Marian theatrical works in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

In Spain, religious drama also developed from the liturgy of the Church. The plays evolved from trope-singing, in the form of question and answer, and were originally in Latin. They later began to appear in the vernacular. It is generally accepted that the Benedictine monks of Cluny brought liturgical drama from the monasteries of France to Spain in the eleventh century. The Auto de los Reyes Magos, dated at about 1150, was previously considered to be the first medieval dramatic work that already represented "an established tradition of

vernacular drama." Perhaps the great lack of surviving liturgical Latin plays in medieval Spanish service books is due to the fact that both French and Spanish plays were being produced in the vernacular.<sup>1</sup>

There has recently been evidence to substantiate the possibility of liturgical plays even prior to the twelfth century, and perhaps dating as far back as the ninth century. The key to this theory is the consideration of Catalonia as culturally part of France, divorced from the rest of Spain from 830 to 1080. We know that Castille was under Arab influence until the Mozarabic rite was abolished by the Council of Burgos in 1080. But in Catalonia, the Roman rite had appeared some two hundred and fifty years earlier, as a direct result of Charlemagne's conquest. The Roman rite immediately affected the development of liturgical drama. There seems to have been no such drama under the Mozarabic rite, according to the discoveries of old manuscripts. One therefore assumes that the Roman rite, with its roots in liturgical drama, was integral to the development of French as well as Catalonian religious plays.<sup>2</sup>

From an examination of a sampling of all these texts, dating from the ninth to the sixteenth centuries, we see that the Virgin rarely appears. While the Three Marys are part of almost every play, the Virgin is only a symbol, a non-participant reminiscent of sixteenth century French plays of the same type, as we shall see later. It is also important for us to note that all these Spanish plays are feast plays. Not one of them is concerned with a Marian miracle.

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<sup>1</sup>Richard B. Donovan, C.S.B. The Liturgical Drama in Medieval Spain (Toronto: 1958), pp. 70-73.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 26-29.

The sacre rappresentazioni are the culmination of earlier medieval religious drama in Italy. Italian liturgical drama was born within the Church and governed by the clergy. It began to flourish in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. At this time there was still competition between the holy works and the profane celebrations of the pagan, or "heathen" holidays. Even celebrations that took place within a church had become so bawdy and raucous at times, that it became necessary for Pope Innocent III in 1210 to condemn even religious dramas that led to such behavior.<sup>3</sup> Like the competition between the Spanish religious plays and the juegos escolares (the Scholastic debates), the contests held on pagan holidays often rivaled the religious spectacles in capturing an audience. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as the Church becomes triumphant in Italy, the sacre rappresentazioni begin to flourish. Like the French miracle plays, called miracles, the sacre rappresentazioni were also known as miracoli.<sup>4</sup> Like the Spanish religious dramas, the Italian miracoli are derived not from Latin liturgical drama, as might be imagined, but from the original liturgy and the Evangelical texts. In Umbria, for example, ritual readings from the plays, or laude, were a part of the standard church service.<sup>5</sup> The importance of the liturgical text is seen in the popularity of the Holy Offices during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The importance of the liturgical text is a direct parallel to the flourishing of short narrative Marian miracles of the thirteenth century whose theme depends on a liturgical text.

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<sup>3</sup>Joseph Spencer Kennard, The Italian Theater from Its Beginnings to the Close of the Seventeenth Century (New York: 1932; rpt. 1964), p. 10. Also c.f. Giulio Bertoni, Storia letteraria d'Italia: Il duecento (Milano: 1910; rpt. 1964), pp. 259-63 on the origins of the Italian theater.

<sup>4</sup>Kennard, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

The development of religious theater in France follows a similar pattern. The tenth and eleventh centuries see a development of liturgical themes.<sup>6</sup> By the twelfth century, and with the popularity of Le Mystère d'Adam, a play dealing with Adam and Eve in the Old Testament, religious theater had become widespread:

It is the first surviving French play that is wholly in the vernacular except for its Latin stage-directions, its use of Latin versified prophecies, and its occasional introduction of liturgical readings and responsories... Above all it indicates by its humour and realistic treatment of sacred themes that its object was to entertain as well as instruct.<sup>7</sup>

At a time when the audience did not read and did not understand Latin, the clerics realized that they had to make these dramas as colorful and as appealing as possible to promulgate their didactic value. But as the drama developed further, the works became more profane, more detached from the Divine Office. One of the few surviving fragments of this period is Les Trois Maries, a translation of a liturgical question and answer play.<sup>8</sup>

Jean Bodel's Jeu de S. Nicolas is the first surviving play of its kind in French. The author combines serious, religious elements with swift action and adept characterization. "The Latin liturgical plays about St. Nicholas (two treat the same legend underlying Bodel's, six are concerned with other legends about the saint) are all comparatively simple and little developed."<sup>9</sup>

But more important, for our purposes, is the connection

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<sup>6</sup>Graham A. Runnals, ed., Le miracle de l'enfant ressuscité, quinzième des Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages (Geneva and Paris: 1972), intro. p. x.

<sup>7</sup>Grace Frank, The Medieval French Drama (Oxford: 1967), p. 76.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

between Bodel's play and the development of the miracle plays in France. The flourishing of miracle plays as well as feast plays seems to be indigenous only to France.<sup>10</sup>

Manly's definition of a miracle play--a miracle play 'is the dramatization of a legend setting forth the life, or the martyrdom, or the miracles of a saint'--was approved by Coffman and Young, Young adding that it is, of course, non-biblical legends of saints that are intended, the legends that accumulated about the names of hallowed and canonized men and women, not about such biblical persons as the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalen, Lazarus, or Paul. According to Manly, there was no gradual transition from undramatized legend to dramatized legend, but at the moment when legend was first cast into dramatic form, a miracle play was born. As Young has shown, however, the model was present in the widely known liturgical plays of the Easter and Christmas season; various legends were versified and sung as unofficial embellishments of the liturgy; and it needed only 'the application of metrical, musical and dramatic form directly to the traditional legends for the creation of a miracle play. 11

An important miracle play in French religious theater is Rutebeuf's Miracle de Théophile, a thirteenth century Marian miracle play, written in 1261, which seems to pave the way for the abundance of Marian plays in the fourteenth century, known as the collection of Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages.

In a century that provided the greatest development within the theater, although not many pieces survive, the Miracles de Nostre Dame are the most numerous among fourteenth century

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<sup>10</sup> Donovan's study of medieval Spanish liturgical plays deals with only feast plays.

<sup>11</sup> Frank, p. 93.

religious plays. The rare exceptions are the Jour du Jugement (1330) and the undated Passion du Palatinus, and the miracle plays.<sup>12</sup> These miracle plays were performed annually at the meetings of the Confrérie Saint-Eloi des Orfèvres de Paris. The sponsors of these presentations, the Confréries or Guilds, like the Goldsmiths' Guild that supported the Marian plays, were allowed to hold only one meeting a year.<sup>13</sup> At this meeting, or siège, there were contests and competitions to determine the best writers of the serventois, the lyric poems that came before or after the miracle play.<sup>14</sup> Only at a time of prosperity could a confrérie afford to sponsor non-industrial activities, and the fourteenth century was such a time.<sup>15</sup>

The authors of the plays were anonymous;<sup>16</sup> it is assumed that the Miracles are the work of twenty different poets. The plays were composed according to a set pattern and presented in the order in which they were written, between 1339 and 1382. The probable date of the manuscript is 1385-89.<sup>17</sup> There are popular and profane elements liberally integrated into the stories; it seems that the audience was already familiar with the work they were about to see.<sup>18</sup> M. Runnals feels that

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<sup>12</sup>  
Runnals, intro. pp. x-xi.

<sup>13</sup>  
Ibid., p. vii.

<sup>14</sup>  
Ibid., p. ix.

<sup>15</sup>  
Ibid., p. xxv.

<sup>16</sup>  
Ibid., p. x, note 3 for bibliographical reference.

<sup>17</sup>  
Ibid., pp. xv-xvii.

<sup>18</sup>  
Ibid., p. vii.

the study of the goldsmiths proves that the Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages belonged to a definite social milieu, the Parisian bourgeoisie of the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

The thirteenth century representations of Mary in theatrical works, while never as complete nor as varied as the miracle stories, still bear some resemblance to the portrayal of her in the narratives. In the plays we see the significance of her presence to the complete work. We will consider the thirteenth century representations in France and in Italy first, and then go on to the fourteenth century collection of Marian miracle plays.<sup>20</sup> We will see that in these later plays, Mary has lost much of her vivacity and charm, as well as her dramatic importance, and has become not much more than the spirit alluded to in the chansons. Like the chansons, the fourteenth century plays substitute a detailed characterization of Mary with an extensive use of Marian symbolism. Mary has lost her human as well as her dramatic appeal, and with the waning of the cult in literature, is represented in a fixed way as the mother of Christ or as the Mediatrix who fulfills God's wishes. Sister Gripkey, while writing of only the French miracle stories, believes that these thirteenth century narratives show Mary as only an instrument of God, that they represent the predominance of a theocentric power in which

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Ibid., p. xxviii. For a more detailed study of the goldsmiths and their social and literary position, see P. Lacroix, Histoire dell'Orfèvrerie (Paris: 1850).

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G. Paris and G. Raynaud, Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages, 8 vols. (Paris: 1876-1883).

Mary's actions and motives are secondary.<sup>21</sup>

Such a point of view may be theologically sound, but it is certainly textually doubtful. In my opinion, Mary, in the thirteenth century collections, acts very much from the dictates of her own strong personality and changing moods, depending on her own often arbitrary judgement. Sister Gripkey's theory of theocentricity as the prime mover of the miracle stories is applicable, however, to the fourteenth century French plays, which we will discuss later in this chapter.

The thirteenth century representation of Mary in Rutebeuf's piece, Le Miracle de Théophile, is an example of a midpoint in her literary characterization. She is not quite the well-characterized Mary seen in the short narrative, but she has not yet become the fourteenth century stock figure. In Chapter Three we have seen how different authors deal with the popular story of Theophilus. While Rutebeuf's Mary is accorded a speaking part in the existing fragment of the play, she is neither the fiercely castigating Virgin of Gautier nor the gently rebuking Mary of Berceo. Rutebeuf's play is more the story of Theophilus than the story of Mary's role in his redemption. It is his prayer to the Virgin that takes center stage. Mary is literally at stage right.<sup>22</sup> Theophilus' lines of dialogue (three hundred ninety-two out of a total six hundred sixty-three) far overshadow Mary's twenty-eight lines. These proportions are very unlike the amount of dialogue accorded to Mary in the narratives, as we have seen in Chapters

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<sup>21</sup>

c.f. Gripkey, The Blessed Virgin Mary as Mediatrix, p. 219.

<sup>22</sup>

Regalado, p. 65.



Three and Four. The important difference in the emphasis on Mary between Rutebeuf's work and the narratives is best explained by understanding his story as theater:

In reality, the Miracle de Théophile is a series of didactic tableaux, illustrating, through a succession of images and attitudes, a story well known to the medieval audience. Only the exemplary moments are staged; they are juxtaposed in much the same manner as a miracle would be "narrated" in a stained-glass window or a sculpture. There is no realistic psychological continuity between the scenes; there are only typical gestures which illustrate clearly the values of Théophile's acts at significant moments...The psychological continuity between these instructive scenes was provided not by the text but by the spectators themselves.<sup>23</sup>

Rutebeuf's Mary appears to be almost as annoyed as Gautier's when she first appears:

Je n'ai cure de ta favele.  
Va t'en, is fors de ma chapele.<sup>24</sup>

But she says very little else to Théophile before she disappears. Such a brief glimpse of Mary does not lend itself to any conclusions about her character as a dramatic figure in the play.

Another important representation of Mary in thirteenth century theater is seen in the Italian Passion plays of that period that celebrate Mary's feast days. The variation of Mary's roles in these plays is even more limited than her representation in the mystic adoration poetry of Jacopone da Todi. In his praises of Mary, referred to in Chapter Four, the Virgin has only two roles: she is either Mary contemplating the infant Jesus, or the mater dolorosa at the foot of the cross.<sup>25</sup> The two roles attributed to Mary in the Italian lyric

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>24</sup> Rutebeuf, Le Miracle de Théophile, ed. Grace Frank (Paris: 1969), p. 22.

<sup>25</sup> Natalino Sapegno, Compendio di storia della letteratura italiana. 3 vols. (Firenze: 1963). I, 86.

poetry of the period are further reduced to one standard role in the theater, even in those plays attributed to Jacopone. She is exclusively the mater dolorosa, the lamenting woman, who becomes a frequent figure in medieval drama. Yet while she has only one pose, her dramatic effect as a character is always emphasized. The most profound and memorable feelings found in the drammi sacri come from the "Vergine che esprime, con immediatezza fluente di sentimento, la sua ansia e il suo dolore di madre." But this expressive force is strictly limited by her sole position as the lamenting woman: "Ma ne le laude sulla Passione raggiungono mai l'intensita d'affetto dello Stabat Mater, ne quelle sulla fine del mondo la terribile e concentrata potenza del Dies irae."<sup>26</sup>

Both the importance of Mary's role in the Passion plays and its dramatic effectiveness are well represented in her monologue in the laude, De compassione Matris ad Filium.<sup>27</sup> We quote the entire monologue as it is a significant example of Mary's speeches, attitudes and emotional stance in the Passion plays in Italy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries:

	O Figlio mio
	Iesu, tu si crucifisso
	per l'omo salvare!
5	O Figlio mio,
	tu si in croce messo
	per l'om che fallio
	ne lo Paradiso!
	en Inferno ne gio
	e tu ne si ucciso
10	per lui liberare!

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<sup>26</sup>

Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>27</sup>

Vincenzo de Bartholomaeis, ed. Laude drammatiche e rappresentazioni sacre, 3 vols. (Firenze: 1943), I, 4.

- Per quella offesanza  
 tu si morto, amore!  
 Non trovi pietanza  
 ne lo to dolore!  
 15 Feruto de lanza  
 te veio lo core:  
 per la plaga pare!
- Tu si coronato  
 de spine pugnenti,  
 20 e hote lassato  
 amici e parenti:  
 O Figlio beato,  
 ora me consenti  
 cun teco passare.
- 25 L'aceto e lo fele  
 cun quale t'ha morto  
 la gente crudele,  
 o Figlio e conforto,  
 se debbe far mele;  
 30 ché pativi a torto  
 lo to tormentare.
- Le toe sante mano,  
 oneste e beate,  
 ne la croce stano  
 35 confitte e clavellate!  
 Quilli che te l'hano  
 cusi pertusate  
 non sanno che fare.
- Li toi pedi belli  
 40 gran pena sostegno,  
 ché cu li clavelli  
 so stritti a lo legno;  
 eran moruelli  
 45 e ora convegno  
 culore mutare.
- Quand'io vedarraio  
 portar figlio en brazo,  
 e lo mio coraio  
 50 sira fredo e iazzo,  
 nessuno vilaio  
 io, trista, non sazzo  
 che dega pilliare!
- s'alcuno fantino  
 55 clamerà sua mamma,  
 el mio cor taupino  
 ardara de flamma;  
 venuto m'ha meno

la fiorita ramma  
o'solea posare.

60        La mia vedovanza  
         non trova paraio,  
         ché senza mancanza,  
         amor, perdut'haio.  
         Per vostra onoranza  
         ne lo mio dannaio  
65        deiate pensare.<sup>28</sup>

If Berceo were to write Passion plays, one would imagine his portraying Mary in much the same way. Not only is she tender and very expressive (as emphasized not only by the language but by the many exclamation points) but her words give a specifically visual and physical inclination to the meaning of her feelings. At the beginning Mary sets up the visual image ("tu si in croce messo") and continues to describe in detail the scene as she sees it, not only as she feels it. Such an emphasis on the visual is part of Berceo's Mary as well. Here Mary describes what she sees in purely physical terms. He is not just Christ on the cross but made up of "Le toe sante mano....," "Li toi pedi belli...." Mary also emphasizes her emotional condition, by such terms as "crudele," "clavellate," "fredo e iazzo," and "trista." While Mary is not telling the audience anything that they do not already know or have not already heard, she is expressing herself in a way that is very emotionally compelling to the viewer and the reader of a didactic work. This combination of elements within a serious piece is one of the most significant creations of medieval didactic literature. The Mary of the Passion plays, however, is Theotokos, Mother

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Ibid., I, 8-10.

of God, and not Notre Dame, worker of miracles.

While Mary has a speaking part in most of the Passion plays, there are comparatively few such plays entirely dedicated to her. Of the one hundred seven plays in the De Bartholomaeis collection, only eight are specifically concerned with Mary, as seen in their titles.<sup>29</sup> These plays are feast plays, and not miracle plays. One such play is the Donna del Paradiso, attributed to Jacopone da Todi, and written about 1250. There are two specific points of interest to us in this play. First, Mary, while playing her usual role of mater dolorosa, dominates the entire play, which begins at the moment in which she receives the news of her Son's arrest from John the Evangelist. Second, as we have seen in our discussion of dialogue in the narratives, only Berceo uses short, lively speeches that emphasize the rapid interchange between characters. Gautier's speeches are lengthy, tending towards monologue; often the listener does not answer at all, or responds some hundred lines later. In Donna del Paradiso, however, the interchange between John and Mary reflects the lively spirit seen in Berceo:

Giovanni,  
Donna del Paradiso,  
lo tuo figliolo e priso,  
Jesu Cristo beato.

Giovanni:  
Accurre, donna, e vide  
che la gente l'allide;  
credo ch'ello s'accide,  
tanto l'hon flagellato.

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29

Vol. I: De compassione Matris ad Filium; Donna del Paradiso; In Dominica post Epifaniam quando Maria fugit in Egiptum; In purificatione Sancte Marie; In annuntiatione Virginis Marie; Assunzione di Maria; Come la Vergine Maria andò al cielo.

Vol. II: Anunptiatio Sancte Marie.

Maria:  
 Como essere purria,  
 Chè non fe mai follia  
 Cristo, la spene mia?  
 Om l'avesse pigliato?

Giovanni:  
 Madonna, ell' è traduto!  
 Juda si l'ha venduto:  
 trenta dinar n'ha 'uto,  
 fatto n'ha gran mercato!...

Maria:  
 O figlio, occhi jocundi,  
 figlio, co' non respundi?  
 Figlio, perché t'escundi  
 dal petto l' se' lattato?

Giovanni:  
 Madonna, ecco la cruce  
 che la gente l'aduce  
 ove la vera luce  
 dei essere levato.

Maria:  
 O cruce, que farai?  
 El figlio me torrai?  
 e que ce aponerai  
 che non ha en se peccato?<sup>30</sup>

As in De compassione Matris ad Filium, the emphasis is on the visual ("Madonna, ecco la cruce") and the physical ("O figlio, occhi jocundi"). The rapid interchange of dialogue continues throughout the play up to the inevitable lamentation by Mary on the death of her Son. The seven remaining plays in the collection that revolve around Mary belong to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In none of these plays does Mary speak of anything or perform any action that does not directly concern her Son.

The French collection of fourteenth century miracle

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<sup>30</sup>

Ibid., I, 21-23.

plays dedicated to Mary is markedly different from the drammi sacri in three ways. These will be considered as the Middle Ages, and this discussion, draw to a close. First, the Italian works in which Mary dominates are always Passion plays and contain no action or character independent of the central drama of the Passion.<sup>31</sup> As the French title implies, the Miracles de Nostre Dame are miracle plays which depend on the accomplishment of a miracle for their dramatic substance. Second, the rapid exchange of dialogue with Mary found in the Italian plays is very rarely seen in the Miracles de Nostre Dame. Definitely influenced by Gautier, these plays show Mary's speeches as unrelated to each other, and often, to the central point of the action.<sup>32</sup> Mary's speeches also appear to hang in a sort of dramatic limbo, as they seem unrelated to the speeches of the other characters. Third, while the French Mary's dramatic role is not that of mater dolorosa, she is also accorded a single, limiting role: that of Mediatrix between God and Man. We will examine these differences by comparing some fourteenth century dramatic texts to thirteenth

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31

It is of interest to the modern reader that modern Passion play revivals still take place, such as the Oberammergau in Germany, in which the local girl who plays the Virgin must legally attest, under penalty of perjury, that she is a virgin. I am indebted to Dean W. B. Fleischmann of Montclair State College for this information.

32

For a more complete study of the possible sources of the miracle plays, see Rudolf Glutz, Les Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages. Deutsche Akad. der Wissenschaften zu Berlin; Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Romanische Sprachwissenschaft, Nr. 9 (Berlin: 1954), pp. 64-77.

century narratives having the same theme in order to further characterize the author's portrayal of Mary.

If we look at one of the miracle plays individually, we can then determine to what extent the characterization of Mary determines her effectiveness as a dramatic figure. L'enfant donné au diable<sup>33</sup> deals with a woman who has made a vow of chastity to the Virgin, but who later marries and has a child. She is so sorry for breaking her promise that she gives up the child to the Devil. When she realizes what she has done, she is terrified and prays to Mary for help. But unlike her actions in the narratives, Mary does not promise to aid her through any action of her own, but commends her to God:

A dieu te comment, doulce suer,  
Je vois autre gent visiter.  
Je ne puis plus cy demourer;  
A dieu te comment, je m'en vois.<sup>34</sup>

The woman's situation does not involve her fear of a possible rejection by God or Christ, a powerful motivation in the narratives. It is Mary who automatically refers the problem to God and her Son, and then acts, only through them, to perform the miracle. She dominates the piece by neither speech nor action, unlike the narratives and the drammi sacri; this is underlined by the few lines accorded her. L'enfant donné au diable is 1527 lines long, of which Mary speaks eighty-eight. As we have mentioned, there is frequent use of Marian symbolism

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<sup>33</sup> Miracles de Nostre Dame, I, 3-56.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 4, vv. 26-29.



in the miracle plays. Here she is often referred to as "fleur de lis"<sup>35</sup> or "roine."<sup>36</sup>

There is never a "running dialogue" between Mary and the suppliant in these plays. Mary answers briefly, then other characters intervene. In this play, Mary makes her second important speech four hundred twenty-eight lines after her first speech. This appearance only serves the purpose of assuring the woman that she will try and convince Christ and God to help:

Ne t'esmaie pas, doulce amie:  
Je prieray mon fil pour toy  
Et saches pour l'amour de moy  
Ton filz apprenra en set ans  
Plus que nulz enfes quatre tans.  
Et saches qu'il sera aussi  
Plus grant en deux ans et demi  
Qu'autre de lui en set années  
Or aies a Dieu tes pensées:  
Je m'en renvoys en paradis.<sup>37</sup>

In the thirteenth century narratives, Mary never speaks of going back to Paradise. Her only memorable "trip" is to Hell to retrieve the letter containing Theophilus' pact with the devil. Mary usually announces her arrivals and departures in so many words to facilitate stage mobility and maintain popular interest. ("Je m'en vois," "Je m'en renvoys.") She does not say anything important for another eight hundred and six lines, at which point she invokes her Son's help:

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<sup>35</sup>

Ibid., p. 3, v. 11.

<sup>36</sup>

Ibid., p. 19, v. 477.

<sup>37</sup>

Ibid., p. 19, vv. 467-76.

Filz, a rescourre cet enfant.  
 Que cilz dyables pris avoient.  
 Sachez por quoy ils l'emportoient:  
 Il vous en feront la clamour.<sup>38</sup>

The secondary nature of Mary's role is exemplified by her final speech in the play. One would imagine that such a speech, in a play seemingly dedicated to her, would be both spiritually and dramatically powerful. But it is only two lines long and underlines her confining role as Mediatrix:

Voulientiers, chier filz, ami doulx:  
 A vostre plaisir vueil ouvrer.<sup>39</sup>

This miracle play is one of the few in the collection of forty in which the Virgin plays a part as large as this, or in which she is at least partially integral to the plot. In most of the plays she has even fewer lines. Her answering a suppliant directly is rare in the dialogue of these miracles.<sup>40</sup> Mary's appearance at the end of the play as a Dea ex machina acting solely as Mediatrix is one of her few dramatically viable functions.

While there are no moralizing asides within the body of the play, twenty-seven of the forty plays begin with a prose sermon based on Biblical information related to the Virgin. This is how Voragine begins each feast day in the Legenda Aurea. Fourteen of the forty French miracles have serventois at the

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<sup>38</sup>

Ibid., p. 46, vv. 1282-85.

<sup>39</sup>

Ibid., p. 52, vv. 1458-59.

<sup>40</sup>

Eugène Lintilhac, Histoire générale du théâtre en France: I--Le théâtre sérieux du moyen-âge (Paris: 1904), p. 182.

end, which are long, lyric non-narrative poems in honor of Mary that also contain Biblical material. On the average the serventois are fifty lines long.<sup>41</sup> All the plays also contain musical rondeaux, intended to be sung, to accompany Mary's arrivals and departures from heaven.<sup>42</sup>

The position of moralizing material is only one characteristic that differentiates the miracle plays from the short narratives. As more than ten of the miracle plays can be directly traced to one of Gautier's stories,<sup>43</sup> it is valuable to compare a play and a story with the same theme, with the specific purpose of determining the differences in the presentation and characterization of Mary. This can best be determined through her speeches.

A theme shared by both Gautier's works and the miracle plays is that of the man excommunicated by his priest for his wrongdoings who prays to Mary because of his previous devotion to her.<sup>44</sup> Mary's first appearance in each work is an appropriate representation of her role. In the play, Mary first appears as from out of nowhere; she has not yet been invoked or involved in the plot. Her first words are addressed to the angels

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<sup>41</sup>

c.f. Grace Frank, The Medieval French Drama. (Oxford: 1967), p. 68. and Graham A. Runnals' introduction to Le miracle de l'enfant ressuscité, quinzième des Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages. (Paris and Geneva: 1972), p. ix.

<sup>42</sup>

Runnals, pp. viii-ix.

<sup>43</sup>

Ibid., intro., p. xliii.

<sup>44</sup>

Gautier, D'un escommenie, III, 74-106. Miracles, Un parroissian escommenie, III, 1-66.

Gabriel and Raphael, who play almost as large a part as she, thereby mitigating her dramatic effectiveness:

Gabriel, va tost, si m'amaines,  
Et toy, Raphaël, mon bon prestre  
Qui tout son temps a volu mettre  
En moy servir com vraiz amis.<sup>45</sup>

Mary seems always to act and speak accompanied by Gabriel and Raphael. Of her thirteen speeches, eight are directly addressed to them, these eight being by far the longest and most significant in the play. As Gabriel and Raphael also answer her and participate in the action, Mary does not seem more important than they are if the reader does not remember that this is supposed to be a Marian play.

In Gautier's story, Mary's first appearance is occasioned by the excommunicant's prayers, and we are well prepared for her speech:

'Or n'aiez mie de peür,  
Fait Nostre Dame, biaux doz frere.  
Ton saint provoire, ton saint pere.  
S'avec noz chaiens le veoies,  
Sez tu se tu le connoistroies?'<sup>46</sup>

Mary's rapid assurance of the man, telling him not to be afraid, is typical of the immediate establishing of a personal relationship between Mary and a suppliant. Such dramatic and personal communication is usually found in the narratives.

While Gautier's Mary occasionally refers the excommunicant to seek God's help ("La douce mere au roi de gloire/Luez commanda au saint provoire.")<sup>47</sup> there is no dramatic character of equal

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<sup>45</sup>

Miracles de Nostre Dame, III, 18, vv. 498-501.

<sup>46</sup>

Gautier, II, 90, vv. 424-28.

<sup>47</sup>

Ibid., p. 90, vv. 437-38.

importance in the story, nor do her actions depend upon the judgment of God. She is her own woman, and makes her own decisions. Gautier prepares us for her independence and spirit by his descriptions:

La mere Dieu, la debonaire,  
 Ausi com ele soloit faire  
 Quant li plaisoit a la foie,  
 Ainz que la nuis fust bien moie,  
 Descendue est en la chapels  
 Et s'amena mainte pucele  
 Et mainte virge et maint archangele,  
 Mainte sainte ame et maint saint angele.<sup>48</sup>

We never approach such a careful description of the Virgin in the miracle plays. The fourteenth century Mary always functions as Mediatrix, announcing her arrivals from and departures to heaven:

Cy endroit plus ne demourray:  
 De vous deux me departiray;  
 A mon glorieux fils m'en vois.  
 Anges, chantés a haulte vois  
 A mon retour.<sup>49</sup>

The speech is her last. As we have noted in L'enfant donné au diable, her last lines of dialogue are not dramatically moving. Gautier's last description of Mary is more revealing of her personality and more structurally a part of her role as a dramatic character:

Et li pechierres ensement  
 Souspire et pleure tenrement,  
 Tel duel en fist toz fu lassés,  
 Mais ne peut estre trespassez  
 Li termes k'eut mis Nostre Dame.<sup>50</sup>

As we have mentioned, the miracle plays, like the chansons

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<sup>48</sup>

Ibid., pp. 87-88, vv. 355-62.

<sup>49</sup>

Miracles de Nostre Dame, III, 63, vv. 1976-80.

<sup>50</sup>

Gautier, III, 99, vv. 657, 61.

pieuses, contain an extensive use of Marian symbolism. Gautier's story of the excommunicant contains very few symbolic references to Mary. But the play is filled with such references, as in "fleur de paiz,"<sup>51</sup> "Vaissiau de purté et saint temple,"<sup>52</sup> and "dame du royal empire,"<sup>53</sup> among many others. There is also extensive use of Latin for the expression of Marian symbolism: "regina celorum," "mater regis angelorum," "flos virginium," "Velut rosa vel lilium,"<sup>54</sup> and others. There are also many references in Latin to liturgical texts and prayers about Mary such as the "O gloriosa domina"<sup>55</sup> and many mentions of the Ave Maria. While the miracle plays are definitely thematically influenced by Gautier's works, it is evident that the representation of Mary found in the theater is completely different from the portrayal found in the narratives. While Gautier's Virgin is sometimes formal and aloof, she still provides an effective contrast to the one-sided Mary of the plays. Such a contrast becomes still more evident when we compare Berceo's Mary to the character found in fourteenth century French theater.

Only two of Berceo's Milagros share a common theme with

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<sup>51</sup> Miracles de Nostre Dame, III, 52, v. 1615.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 55, v. 1716.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 58, v. 1821.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 52, v. 1607.

the miracle plays: La deuda pagada, in which Mary does not speak,<sup>56</sup> and La abadesa encinta,<sup>57</sup> which we will discuss later. Another of Berceo's Milagros, however, shares similar characters, a similar predicament and a similar role for Mary with one of the miracle plays. Berceo's El monje y San Pedro<sup>58</sup> and the play Miracle de un pape qui vendi le basme<sup>59</sup> both present an interesting quadrangle of characters: the sinner, Mary, St. Peter and God and/or Christ. Berceo's story deals with a simple monk in San Pedro's monastery who sins by having a child by a prostitute and dies suddenly without confession. The devil takes his soul and San Pedro, to whom the monk has been devoted, begs Christ to help save the monk's soul. But this is a story of double intercession, because Christ refuses San Pedro, telling him that the monk's sin was too great. San Pedro then invokes Mary's help to intercede with her Son in order to mitigate the punishment of the monk's soul in Hell. Mary asks her Son for help, and he answers her:

'Madre--dijo Don Cristo--, yo saberlo querria:  
Que negocio vos trae con esta compannia?'  
'Fijo--disso la madre--, a rogarvos venia  
Por alma de un monge de fulana mongia.'  
'Madre--dijo el fijo--, non serie derechura  
Tal alma de tal omne entrar en tal folgura:

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<sup>56</sup>

c.f. Miracle de un marchand et un juif, VI, 169-224..

<sup>57</sup>

c.f. Miracle de l'abbesse grosse, I, 57-100.

<sup>58</sup>

Berceo, Milagro VII, 43-47.

<sup>59</sup>

Miracles de Nostre Dame, I, 353-97.

Serie menoscabada toda la escriptura;  
 Mas por el vuestro ruego faremos y mesura.  
 Quiero fazer atanto por el vuestro amor:  
 Torne aun al cuerpo en qui fo morador,  
 Fuga su penitencia como faz peccador,  
 E puede seer salvo por maneira meior.<sup>60</sup>

While Mary acts as Mediatrix (indirectly for the sinner and directly for San Pedro) it is Christ's love for her that causes the happy ending: "Quiero fazer atanto por el vuestro amor." San Pedro does not act until he hears that Mary has been successful:

Quando udió Sant Pedro esti tan dulz mandado,  
 Vió que su negocio era bien recabdado:  
 Torno a los diablos, conceio enconado:  
 La alma que levavan, tolliogela sin grado.<sup>61</sup>

All definitive action in the narrative depends on Mary's effectiveness, not only as Mediatrix before her Son, but as a dramatic character necessary to the plot. Unlike Berceo's story El romero de Santiago, in which the supplicant gives thanks to the saint as well, the monks of this monastery thank God, the Virgin and also San Pedro.<sup>62</sup> Berceo reminds us, at the end, of the importance of Mary's position:

Nol serie negada ninguna peticion,  
 No li dicrie tal fijo a tal madre de non.<sup>63</sup>

The miracle play dealing with St. Peter concerns a Pope who has sold the balsam for the lamps of St. Peter's chapel, and is subject to the saint's damnation. He prays to Mary to intercede for him, and the interplay of petitions and the

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<sup>60</sup>

Berceo, p. 45, stanzas 171, 172.

<sup>61</sup>

Ibid., stanza 173.

<sup>62</sup>

c.f. our own Chapter Two, p. 68.

<sup>63</sup>

Berceo, p. 47, stanza 181.



interchange of power is not very different from the interactions in Berceo's story. What is totally different is Mary's role as Mediatrix and the realization of her possibilities as a character. In the play, Mary not only shares the celestial part of the stage with her Son, but also with God the Father and the angels Gabriel and Michiel. St. Peter and God converse at some length concerning the Pope's fate. St. Peter clearly underlines his subordinate position by bowing to the will of God: "Vostre conmanement feray."<sup>64</sup> But Mary has no special power nor privilege beyond that allotted to Peter; she speaks the same words to God: "Vostre commandement feray."<sup>65</sup> While San Pedro has an important role in Berceo's story, a role rarely accorded to a saint in a Marian miracle narrative, it is Mary who is most definitely the protagonist. But in the play, not only do the Virgin and St. Peter seem equal in the eyes of God, their roles are equally subordinated to Him. As in L'enfant donné au diable, in which Mary constantly addresses herself to the angels Gabriel and Raphael, both Mary and St. Peter constantly speak to the angels Gabriel and Michael:

Saint Pére

Sire, de qui naiscent touz biens,  
Vostre commandement feray.  
Maintenant plus n'atenderay.  
Gabriels, amis, que t'affaites,

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<sup>64</sup>

Miracles de Nostre Dame, I, 365, v. 306.

<sup>65</sup>

Ibid., p. 377, v. 660.

Et toy, Michiel: vous deux me faittes  
La compaignie.<sup>66</sup>

Nostre Dame

Mon pere, mon fil, mon espoux,  
Vostre commandement feray  
Maintenant, plus n'atenderay.  
Michiel, et vous, Gabreil, sus:  
Venez avecques moy la jus  
Par compaignie.<sup>67</sup>

Mary, like Peter, is solely an instrument of God:

Pere de toute creature.  
Obeir vueil a ce que dis.  
Sus, seigneurs, de ce paradis  
Vous convient maintenant partir  
Et laval avec moy venir  
Ou Dieu m'envoie.<sup>68</sup>

Her words, like her actions, must be ordained by God the  
Father or by her Son:

My ange, alons nous ent de cy  
Avec mon filz lassus en gloire.  
Rien plus ne li pense a dire ore  
Que ly ay dit.<sup>69</sup>

She equates her role as Mediatrix with St. Peter's role:

Biau filz, c'est raisons et droiture  
Que vostre volente soit faitte.  
Amis Pierre, fay, si t'affaite.  
Et vous, anges, se en ralons  
A ly et le reconseillons  
Nous touz ensemble.<sup>70</sup>

Since Mary, Peter, Gabriel and Michael share equal dramatic  
importance and an almost equal number of lines, it is certainly  
Christ who emerges as the most important celestial character.

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<sup>66</sup>

Ibid., pp. 365-66, vv. 304-10.

<sup>67</sup>

Ibid., p. 377, vv. 658-63.

<sup>68</sup>

Ibid., p. 380, vv. 751-56.

<sup>69</sup>

Ibid., p. 382, vv. 818-22.

<sup>70</sup>

Ibid., pp. 383-84, vv. 869-73.

The most interesting miracle play of the collection is, not surprisingly, the story of the pregnant abbess. We have discussed how different authors deal with this theme in Chapter Three. We will now deal with the fourteenth century play based on the same theme, to see how the characterizations of both Mary and the abbess have changed, and how the story is affected by those changes. The play is more successful than many of the others partly because Mary has no divine competition. Neither God nor Christ ever appear. This would seem to be a good dramatic position in which to fully develop the character of Mary. But ironically, as in Berceo's story, the Virgin is upstaged by the abbess in her own miracle story. This play is a rare exception to Mary's usual role as active Mediatrix; since God and Christ do not appear she is only Mediatrix by suggestion, as when the abbess cries:

Lasse! et se je fas ceste emprise,  
Je perderay de Dieu l'amour...<sup>71</sup>

After the miracle has taken place, the abbess says it was due to God's mercy:

Voulentiers, dame; que piteux  
Soit Diex a ceulx qui a tel point  
M'ont traictée, et si leur pardoint,  
S'il ont mespris.<sup>72</sup>

Unfortunately, Mary's dramatic effectiveness is lessened again by the presence of Gabriel and Michael. The abbess is the most vivid character of the miracle plays as a whole; she emerges as one of the few believable characters. Her

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<sup>71</sup>

Miracles de Nostre Dame, I, 66, vv. 220-21.

<sup>72</sup>

Ibid., p. 93, vv. 1049-52.

dramatic strength is seen in her speech to Mary:

Dame, combien de pecheresse  
 Aie esté et le soie encore,  
 De tes doulx yex me regarde ore,  
 Et de l'ennemy me deffens,  
 Qui ne chace qu'a mon offens;  
 Car par lui aray je diffame,  
 Se ne me deffens, doulce dame;  
 Pour c'humblement vous pri mercy,  
 Me vueillez aidier et secourre,  
 Car je ne say ailleurs recourre;  
 Et se vous me daingnez aidier,  
 Je vous vueil enconvenancier  
 Que jamais en jour de ma vie  
 N'aray de plus pechier envie,  
 Mais de touz poins m'en osteray,  
 Doulce dame, et vous serviray  
 Chascun jour par devocion...73

The strong sense of emotion and the immediacy of her dramatic and personal situations are evident. But when Mary makes her first speech shortly after, it is something of a disappointment: it is directed to the angels:

Or sus, my ange, appertement  
 Venez moy vous deux convoier,  
 Et en convoiant avoier  
 Vous vueillez de dire un rondel  
 Tout le meilleur et le plus bel  
 Que sacez dire.74

Her failure to directly address the abbess breaks the dramatic continuity. Gautier's Virgin addresses the abbess directly the first time that she speaks, in a spirit of compassion:

'Or n'aies mie de peur,  
 Fait Nostre Dame, bele amie.  
 Je sui la mere Dieu, Marie,  
 Por pecheurs pu nuit et jor.75

Berceo's Mary also speaks directly to the abbess the first

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Ibid., p. 85, vv. 803-20.

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Ibid., p. 86, vv. 835-40.

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Gautier, II, 186, vv. 128-32.

time she appears, in a spirit of camaraderie:

Dissoli la Gloriosa: 'Aforzad, abbadesa,  
 Bien estades comigo, non vos pongades quessa,  
 Sepades que vos traio mui buena promessa,  
 Meior que non querrie la vuestra prioressa.<sup>76</sup>

In the play, Mary's second speech is directed to the angels as well. It is not until her third speech that she addresses the abbess. But she is angry, unlike Berceo's and Gautier's Virgin, and emphasizes the abbess' sin and not her possible redemption:

Comment t'osas tu entechier  
 En tel vice n'en tel ordure  
 Comme du pechié de luxure,  
 Dont ton bon nom si perdu as,  
 Que bien voiz que tu en seras  
 A honte a touzjours mais livrée,  
 Se par moy n'en es delivrée?<sup>77</sup>

Mary eventually performs the same miracle as in the narrative. She delivers the child and spirits it away to a hermit who will raise it. But perhaps she is so uncharitable in her attitude toward the abbess because there has been little previous mention of the abbess' devotion to Mary which was an integral factor in the narratives:

N'aray de plus pechie envie,  
 Mais de touz poins m'en osteray,  
 Doulce dame et vous serviray  
 Chascun jour par devocion.<sup>78</sup>

Ce vous promet, en escripray  
 Que jamais je ne cesseray  
 De leer vous et gracier

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<sup>76</sup>

Berceo, p. 126, stanza 531.

<sup>77</sup>

Miracles de Nostre Dame, I, 87, vv. 871-77.

Et vostre doulx filz mercier  
A genouz et a jointes mains.<sup>79</sup>

As in the other plays, there is an extensive use of Marian symbolism, specifically by the abbess, who calls Mary "Damedé,"<sup>80</sup> "roy de gloire, fontaine vive,"<sup>81</sup> "dame des cieulx souveraine."<sup>82</sup> The abbess does not answer until Mary has spoken six times, mostly to other characters. This eliminates the interchange of dialogue that makes the characterizations of Mary and the abbess so effective in Berceo. After the abbess finally speaks, her speech is directed to no one, as there are no further appearances by Mary. The lack of continuity weakens the abbess' effect as a dramatic character. At the beginning of the play, when she speaks of her situation to the other nuns, she is more lively and believable:

E! Dieux! com tresbien preschie a  
Mes suers, ce preudomme sanz vice!  
La doulce vierge en son service  
Le maintiengne jusqu'a la fin,  
Et si pur le face et si fin  
Qu'es cieulx soit soame.<sup>83</sup>

But even the abbess, the character with the widest range of dramatic possibility, succumbs at the end to the mechanical, stereotyped treatment given to all the characters, especially to the celestial ones, in the fourteenth century collection.

There is also a flourishing of uncollected fourteenth

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<sup>79</sup>

Ibid., p. 90, vv. 946-50.

<sup>80</sup>

Ibid., p. 67, v. 263.

<sup>81</sup>

Ibid., p. 85, vv. 789-90.

<sup>82</sup>

Ibid., p. 89, v. 925.

<sup>83</sup>

Ibid., p. 63, vv. 128-33.

century Latin plays in France, dedicated to Mary, partially due to Pope Gregory's approval of a new festum in her honor, celebrated for the first time on November 21, 1372.<sup>84</sup> Such plays are always dedicated to the four traditional Marian feast days used by Voragine in the Legenda Aurea (Purification, Annunciation, Assumption, Nativity). But these plays have no plot or dramatic action; they are merely presentations of the Biblical material appropriate to that feast day. There are no secular characters, and Mary is either absent or a plastic figure who never speaks.<sup>85</sup> The fifteenth century produced a fair number of plays where Mary appears, the Passions cycliques. In their celebration of feast days, they are similar to the thirteenth and fourteenth century drammi sacri. As in the earlier Italian plays, Mary is accorded only the role of mater dolorosa in these French plays:

Nostre Dame

Ça, mon enffant, ça, mon amy,  
ça, mon tresor, ça, ma richesse!  
Rendez moy la seule possesse  
que jamais au monde je quier. 86

While the fifteenth century Mary shares the role of mater dolorosa with her Italian predecessor, she lacks her vibrance of language and immediacy of action. The last cycle of plays

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<sup>84</sup>Karl Young, The Drama of the Medieval Church, 2 vols. (Oxford: 1967), II, 227.

From "L'ensezelissement de Jésus" in Arnoul Gréban, Le Mystère de la Passion, édition critique par Omer Jodogne. (Bruxelles: 1965), p. 361, vv. 26880-26883.

From "L'ensezelissement de Jésus" in Arnoul Gréban, Le Mystère de la Passion, édition critique par Omer Jodogne. (Bruxelles: 1965), p. 361, vv. 26880-26883.

dedicated to Mary is represented by Jehan Louvet's Confrères de Nostre-Dame-de-Liesse presented in Paris between 1536 and 1550. Mary is little more than the plastic figure she begins to become in the fourteenth century.<sup>87</sup>

The thirteenth century must be seen as the century in which Mary is best represented as a vivid, multi-faceted, totally believable character. The collections of short narratives of that century exemplify, with room for the individual preferences of each author, the peak of literary creativity in producing a successful characterization of Mary. After the short narratives, Mary not only changes, but she begins to fade away: "On the threshold of the fourteenth century men felt that this Virgin, conceived by the theologians with the majesty of an impersonal idea, had become too remote from humanity."<sup>88</sup> The gap that had always existed between theology and the beliefs of the lower classes, between the official Trinity of Father-Son-Holy Ghost and the popular trinity of Father-Son-Mother begins to widen during the thirteenth century with the popularity of the cult of the Virgin. But in the fourteenth century there begins to develop a distance between the Virgin and the common man. Later literary representations of Mary continue the process: she is seen as a tool of a remote and unapproachable God, not

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<sup>87</sup>

Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>88</sup>

Emile Mâle, The Gothic Image..., p. 236.



as Mary, helper of the poor and mother of the defenseless. The Miracles de Nostre Dame, Milagros de Nuestra Señora and Cantigas de Santa María are well-named; Mary and Mary alone is responsible for both their religious and dramatic effectiveness. But the fourteenth century collection of plays entitled Miracles de Nostre Dame does not really contain Marian miracles at all. These are God's miracles, and through His divine grace He allows Mary to function as His instrument. The temperamental, feminine, independent and strong-willed Mary of the thirteenth century narratives would never have tolerated such a subordinate role.

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